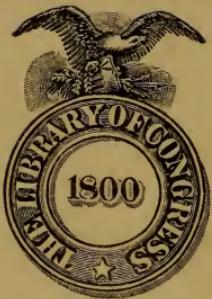


THE
PLAN OF SALVATION



J. B. SHELNUTT



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THE
PLAN OF SALVATION

James B. Shelnutt
BY
J. B. SHELNUYT
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A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR.

My desire in presenting this work is to help the seeker of truth to a better understanding of God's word. I have no selfish motive; my desire is that men may know the truth and obey it.

I have tried to be simple and plain, so that plain "folks" may be helped by reading it. I make no claim to elegance of style, nor to a choice selection of words, nor to beautified rhetorical rounded figures.

This work is a production of spare moments. I am Clerk and was Clerk of the Walton Superior Court, Walton County, Ga., during the writing of this book.

The odd moments that I have used in procuring the contents of this book have been beneficial to me, and I trust that you may find truths that will help you in making a successful life's journey.

With love for the souls of men and for the church of Jesus Christ, I offer you this message.

J. B. SHELNUTT, SR.

Monroe, Ga.

✓

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No. 1.

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THE PLAN OF SALVATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW BIRTH.

Man has by observation and experience learned that the laws of God are deep, high, and wide; that, after ages and ages of study, he is still confronted with many secrets and unexplored fields of beauties and harmonies in the created and the laws governing such.

Man was placed in a world teeming with all kinds of birds and fowls; animals, wild and domestic; waters, in all shapes and depths; and upon the earth, all kinds of plants and trees; in the earth, all kinds of metals; and planets, huge in size, flying with electric speed around and above us. Although creation is marvelously wonderful, the laws by which the created are governed are almost as wonderful as creation itself. Everything, from the smallest to the greatest, has a governing law.

The moment that man begins the study of himself and his relation to the created and to his Creator, he enters the greatest field of

thought permitted man to pass through—that the law of spiritual life, the principles and power that God has instituted to work and influence the actions of man, to prepare him for eternity, in a new world, is the climax of thought and the greatest of all laws.

Mankind seems satisfied to stay as long as possible, and has gone to work and out of the created materials has constructed machinery in accordance with the laws that be until this world is a grand machine shop. But a time is coming when man will cease to construct, and every wheel stop, and a new creation ushered in by Him that made the present worlds. Man's abode is to be changed.

Among the many wonderful things made known to man is the possibility of a new birth. Nothing in heaven or on earth is so important. Entering the kingdom of God stands first as to man's duty. "First seek ye the kingdom of God" is every man's privilege and duty. Jesus had a conversation with Nicodemus on the subject of the new birth, to which we invite your attention. (John 3: 1-8.)

The idea of a new birth was startling to Nicodemus. He said: "How can these things be?" He thought of a reentering of mother's womb and being born again. Do you claim this new birth, or are you in doubt? We believe that somebody is yet mistaken about this birth. Jesus, in his explanation, emphasizes and tells

him of what a man must be born: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Jesus came that a new kingdom might be set up. John the Baptist said: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." A new order and rule of heaven is about to take place; and for man to enter, he must be born of water and of the Spirit—not water alone nor Spirit alone, but both.

The birth of flesh is one birth; and of water and of the Spirit, another. Some claim that the birth of water refers to that of mother's womb. But that will not hold good. Jesus is telling Nicodemus, a man born of the flesh, of what a man must be born to enter the kingdom of God. If a man had a dozen mothers, that would not change it. The word "except" settles the question as to what a man is to be born of and the conditions of entering.

Nicodemus was told of something relative to the future—how a man could enter "the kingdom at hand." He could not enter "the kingdom at hand" until set up. John the Baptist made ready a people for the Lord. He told them that a *great One* was coming, having authority and power for salvation. But John the Baptist did not set up the kingdom. "For a testament is of force after men are dead." (Heb. 9: 17.)

On the day of Pentecost the Spirit came and the kingdom was set up. Compare Isa. 2: 2, 3; Dan. 2: 44, 45; Mic. 4: 1, 2 to Luke 24: 44-47; then read Acts 2, and we find the fulfillment. Peter, in referring to this day (Acts 11: 15), calls it "the beginning." Jesus had said that it should begin at Jerusalem. According to the foregoing, at Pentecost is the time and place. Every kingdom must have a king, and at this time Jesus had gone to the Father and was made King.

That we may better understand what Jesus means by being born of water and of the Spirit, we think the sure plan is to find out what the apostles taught and see what the people did after the kingdom was set up. The apostles preached the terms of admission, and thousands entered the kingdom under their preaching. Jesus explained through the apostles what man must do in order to be "born of water and of the Spirit."

If the people who obeyed on the day of Pentecost entered the kingdom, and the record says they "were added," our contention is, they were "born of water and of the Spirit," for Jesus had said, "Except." Therefore we conclude that to be born is to be saved; that to be saved is to be pardoned of sin; that the new birth is the completion of pardon.

What is it that is to be born? Jesus said, "Except a man," meaning the entire man.

Also notice, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," just as "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." There is a new spiritual creation—a new being formed by the power of God through gospel law.

In the following chapters we wish to show how a sinner is pardoned and what it is to be "born of water and of the Spirit."

The kingdom mentioned is spiritual, and man must be born of the Spirit to enter. In the kingdom of nature lives no man that has not the birth of the flesh. Infants are not subjects of this law. A babe has no personal sin. It has violated no law. It knows not law. Sin is a transgression of law. Therefore a babe needs not this new birth.

God planted two trees—the tree of *knowledge of good* and *evil* and the *tree of life*—in the garden of Eden. Adam, the father of all, ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and for his disobedience was driven from the garden. It seems that the tree of life bore fruit, of which if a man continued to eat he would not die. He being taken from this tree, physical death was the result. He was in a sense physically dead, because his access to this tree was cut off. There was no chance for him to return. No law of pardon at this time.

Adam's disobedience resulted in a physical death to all of his race, because taken from

the tree of life. The effect of Adam's sin puts every person in the grave. But through Jesus the human family will be raised. So there is a fixed penalty and a fixed resurrection. Death is a debt that every human being will have to pay. But, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, death is only an open door into eternity.

Jesus said, "Except a man," referring to all mankind and to an age of reason and accountability. It is our own personal disobedience that necessitates the new birth. When we appear at the judgment bar of God, we will not be punished or rewarded for what Adam did. The only debt unsettled of Adam's disobedience is death, and that we must pay.

Natural birth has its mysteries, but that does not prevent new births. We will never understand all the deep things about spiritual birth, but that will not prevent new births. The wisdom and power of God in spiritual law for birth is as superior to that of the natural as the spiritual is above the natural. The law of spiritual birth is as natural to spiritual birth as the law of nature is to the natural.

Jesus, in telling Nicodemus about the birth of the Spirit, mentions the wind. It comes and goes. We hear its sound, but we cannot tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. We can tell the direction it comes and goes in passing, but we do not know how long before

reaching us it was in a current moving in a different direction, nor how high nor how low. We do not know how long after it passes before it is in a current moving in an opposite direction. Who can tell one hour before or after the whereabouts of the wind that is now passing?

Remember that the idea of a new birth was new teaching for the world at that time. Jesus makes mention of the wind to teach that the birth of the Spirit is invisible; that man can no more see this birth than he can see the passing wind. We have never seen our own spirit nor the Spirit of God. The kingdom of God is not of this world. We have an invisible King, kingdom, and birth.

Jesus taught much by analogy. In speaking of the invisible kingdom, he refers to natural, material objects, that we might get the idea of the ruling principles of the kingdom. He mentions "a mustard seed," "pearl of great price," "marriage of a king's son," "man traveling into a far country," "talents," and so on, each one explaining something of God's love and mercy and man's responsibility and reward for labor.

Mankind is divided into two classes—the *ins* and *outs*. All men, whether in the kingdom or out, are subjects of the final result of a judgment. God rules the world, and the man that will not be ruled in obedience will

be ruled in punishment. This kingdom is not marked off by geographical lines, but by lines of uprightness and godliness, thereby making a separation of the obedient and disobedient.

The gospel tells how to enter the kingdom and what to do after entering. This kingdom is not carried from one country or community to another as a visible object; but the gospel, the principles of the kingdom, must be carried. Principles have not bodily form. Their force and power can be heard and felt as the passing wind, but you cannot see them. We can only feel and observe the effects. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus thought of a visible birth, and Jesus, to correct this, mentions the wind and its mysterious movements.

A man born of the Spirit can no more see the mighty workings of God in this birth than the man in the field could see the wind. It is invisible, takes place by an invisible power, and born into an invisible kingdom.

CHAPTER II.

THE BEGETTING POWER—THE GOSPEL.

Birth in no case imparts life. There is life before birth. Birth is the change of a living being from one stage of existence into another. This is true of the natural and also of the spiritual. The imparting or beginning of life is in the begetting.

God has law and order in everything. He has given germs of spiritual life in his appointed way, just as he has given germs of natural life. Both are by law and are wonderful. We, like Nicodemus, marvel at the mystery of a new birth, but such is the power of God.

“For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” (1 Cor. 4: 15.) Notice: One Father; begotten in Christ Jesus; Paul, the agent; the gospel, the power or seed. (Luke 8: 11.)

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Has the gospel

anything to do with salvation? Has it any power? "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1: 16.) It is *the* power, not *a* power. Power of whom? "Of God." Power for what? "Unto salvation." For whom? "Every one that believeth." The gospel has commands; and when obeyed, you have used the power of God in the gospel for salvation. Spiritual life comes through the gospel, the law of life.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6: 63.) There is life, there is spirit, there is power in the word of God. When this old world is fired by the eternal powers of God and burned up, the word of God will be living. We are certain two things will survive the destruction and pass into the next world—our character and the word of God.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a living word. It has living principles, and is the power of God formulated into law. The written word is the expression of the principles that God has put forth for man's redemption. The Code of Georgia is a written book, but the book itself is not law, but the principles it contains. Just so with the written word of God. The Spirit and power of God for new life is in it. The

virtue of the gospel is not in the ink and paper upon which it is written, but in God. So it matters not in what language it is written; if the facts and their order are preserved as given by inspiration, it remains the one and the same gospel. When we refer to the gospel and its power, we mean the eternal truths of God in the New Testament.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb. 4: 12.) The body goes to dust and the spirit to God. There is a separation of the joints and marrow—“dividing asunder.” How is this done? By the word of God. His word is law expressed.

Jesus said a sower went out to sow seed. He tells where the seed fell and the results. In his explanation of the parable he says the seed is the word of God and the field is the world. One object of the parable is to teach man to give the seed an opportunity; hence the warning: “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Jesus told the results of the sowing to teach man the adversities, devouring enemies, and hindrances to a growth and perfection of the natural grain, and that the spiritual seed and their growth and perfection of fruit in the life have hindering causes. Spir-

itual seed are to grow up in the life of man and bear fruit, as the natural grain grow up from the soil. The seed sown by the sower were the same in kind, but the unfavorable conditions of the soil and want of cultivation prevented a general harvest.

"The good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it." He gives heed to the word, and thereby learns the value of obedience. Such a man brings forth fruit, and is commended by the Master. Jesus does not teach that the created condition of man is like the fruitful and unfruitful conditions of the soil, but that without proper understanding, care, and cultivation they would prove themselves to be as the unfruitful soil. A harvest is what the sower wants. That is why he sows. Man can, by his carelessness, negligence, and resentfulness, prove himself to be like the unfruitful soil. This is the lesson, and Jesus asked them to hear it.

The germ of life is deposited in natural seed and not in the soil. Yet the soil is necessary for its growth and perfection. The life germ of spiritual life is in the seed of the kingdom of God. The fruit grown is as natural to the seed as that which grow of wheat is to its seed. The seed represent the truths, the facts, the principles of the law of the kingdom of God. The seed must fall in heart soil in order to have a spiritual harvest. It is just as impossi-

ble for a man to be begotten into new life without the seed of the kingdom as it is in nature. The heart is the seed bed. Out of it are the issues of life. Set right the heart, and that corrects the life.

In order to have a begetting there must be a cohabitation. This is true of the vegetable kingdom, the human family, and spiritual birth. This law stands between the sinner and the kingdom of God, just as the law of nature stands between the unborn and the kingdom of man. There is nothing so powerful, so sacred as the word of the living God. By his word he can shake the earth, crumble mountains, and fire the seas. Man's exalted position in creation is proof of a spiritual creative demand, and this demand is fully met in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is higher, nobler, and more perfect than all other provisions made for man.

What could the apostles or any other set of men do without the seed of the kingdom? Take away the word of God, and you take away the plan of salvation. Take away the word of God, and you take away man's guide to the Savior. When the seed of the kingdom is conceived in the heart, a soul is begotten—a new life begun. "How can a man believe in him of whom he has not heard?" Preaching the gospel is seed sowing. Man's creative spiritual possibility would be a blank without

the word of God, and the gospel would be a failure without the existence of such a possibility.

Seed and their law of production is a wonderful thought. To every seed is given its own body. It matters not how small, it has a place and a mission in the world. The seed of the kingdom have a mission far more important. New life thoughts and principles are implanted in the heart, and spiritual fruit ripen in the life.

You may admire the symmetry, fragrance, and beauty of plants and flowers, but a life beautified by heavenly graces is God's chief delight. Flowers were made for man to admire, but the fruits of spiritual life are for time and eternity, the most valuable production that will ever grow.

Man can as easily walk to the moon as he can go to heaven without the seed of the kingdom in the heart. The world would be perfectly helpless without the word of God. The gospel has a wonderful power in it, and that is why God ordained that it should be preached. It is the sword of the Spirit, and the first thing pierced in the heart is: "God so loved the world." There is no rock crusher so powerful as the love of God. It is a silent, gentle power, but has crushed many stony hearts.

Men before they accept the teachings of

God are natural men—carnal-minded, not subject to the law of God. Such minds are to be changed or renewed, and the gospel is the power. Light comes by the entrance of God's word. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." The object of teaching is to instruct, and by instruction the carnal mind is enlightened, thereby becomes subject to the law of God. No man is a prepared subject of the law until taught. Men that were dead in trespasses and sins when the gospel came to them were certainly carnal-minded, and, according to gospel record, they were changed and became subjects of God's law and obeyed it.

God does not save men independent of the gospel. The plan of salvation is in and through the gospel and not on the outside. The first impressive touch of power divine is made by reaching the heart with the seed of the kingdom. Spiritual seed have spiritual life germs; and when they germinate in the heart, then the first stage of new life is begun. Evil seed have their growth in like manner. The youth of our land suffer from the evil teachings of books filled with the seed of highway wickedness. Wickedness and righteousness have their beginning or infant stage and grow from seed. First the sowing, then the stalk, then the blade, then the ear.

CHAPTER III.

FAITH.

God has given evidence of his power and wisdom in both natural and divine law. His teachings in all ages have been to prepare man for a greater usefulness and blessings. There is something greater for man than the present world affords. God's approach upon the human family has been through revealed truth. His word consists of facts divinely attested by miracles, the idea being to lay a foundation for man's belief—something by which he can take hold, something about which he may reason.

The natural disposition of fair-minded men is to reason with given evidence. As man is the only creature of earth that is able to consider the wonderful works of God in creation, God has by that means put his work of creation in evidence for man to realize the wonderful power of his Creator. This evidence of supernatural power no man has been able to explain away satisfactory to himself nor to any one else.

If God made one grain of sand, he made the mountains; if he made one drop of water, he

made the oceans; if he can create worlds, he can make a heaven; if he can by natural law people the earth, he can by spiritual law prepare man for a spiritual eternity. From objects grand and momentous to the sublime and glorious is the span of faith.

The evidence of God is his plowshare to prepare heart soil for the seed of the kingdom. God has never required man to believe without first giving evidence, telling him what to believe and what to do. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." God has come to man with evidence, commands, and promises. Man meets God in obedience.

Faith within itself is not a self-generating principle, but the result of facts and causes of God's power and teachings brought to man's consideration and knowledge. Unless there is something to believe, man cannot believe. There must be something to believe, and man must have knowledge of what he is to believe.

How, then, does faith come? "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." In the word of God there is something to be heard, and faith comes by hearing his word. Man is to hear understandingly, rightly considering the word of God in the light of evidence and reason. It is not by some abstract influence independent of the word of God.

In natural life there is first a begetting, and this first stage continues to live and grow until birth and then emerges into future life. So the spiritual begotten of God is to grow until spiritual birth into the kingdom of God; and, as a new-born babe, the milk of the gospel is necessary for future growth, the first stage of spiritual existence developing and living.

We do not beget ourselves. The gospel is to be heard. Man is to believe it. God begets through his law. This is a fixed law, the same as the begetting by his natural law. We are spiritually begotten when the spiritual seed of the kingdom is conceived in the heart, but a spiritual growth must be made before there can be a spiritual birth. A natural child after it is begotten must grow before birth.

The natural child has no will, no knowledge of its being begotten, growth, and birth. In spiritual begetting, growth, and birth the reasoning power of man is addressed, and he is required to act according to the law of life in the gospel. It is with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The Bible is not a dictionary, but Paul defines faith: "The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Invisible promises are made visible by faith. It has a substance by which future joys are made so certain that a hope is created. When a man

believes God, the future, with its promises, is evidence, although unseen.

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." We know that worlds exist, but were not eyewitnesses of the creation. We have not seen God; neither have we seen Jesus Christ. We have never witnessed a resurrection, but others have. There are many things in our native State we have not seen, but others have. We see a part of what has been written in the Book with the natural eye, and that which we do not see we accept as true from what we do see. The evidence in what we do see causes us to believe in things not seen.

In order that we may better understand the nature and working power of faith, we call your attention to a few examples.

On one occasion there was a man who had palsy. He was carried by some parties to the place where Jesus was stopping. The press was so great they could not get close to him. They went upon the house top, tore up the roof, and let the sick man down in his presence. When Jesus saw their faith, he saith unto him: "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." What did Jesus see? Their faith. It was seen in their efforts to get the sick man to the Master. The sick man, no doubt, was anxious to go. Jesus had been healing, and this evidence of his power produced their activity.

The same is true of the *sinner woman* who washed the Savior's feet with her tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her head. Faith takes place in the heart, and is not seen until expressed in action. A still faith is a dead faith.

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." If they had marched around but once, would the walls have fallen? By faith they did as commanded. We may not understand why certain requirements are made in order to bring about certain things, but we must trust God for the results. One of the evidences of faith is trust. No doubt, from a human standpoint, it seemed impossible to them; but God's power was trusted by doing what they were commanded. If they had marched around the walls seven times the first day and once the seventh day, the walls would not have fallen. Unless we do exactly as commanded, it is not by faith.

When God promises man a blessing and tells him what to do, it is by faith that he expects the blessing through obedience. "We walk by faith." By faith we go from one command to another, enduring the hindrances and unexpected trials.

"The elders obtained a good report" by faith. It is what we do by faith that counts with God and makes up the *good report*. You show us a

man of great faith, and we will show you something that he is doing. It is by faith we obey, expecting the unseen promises. "Without faith it is impossible to please God"—impossible because without it man cannot and will not obey God.

CHAPTER IV.

FAITH—CONTINUED.

Paul, in his writings, shows the relation of faith to the law of works given by Moses. "The righteousness of God through Jesus Christ was declared that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." It is not by our righteousness that salvation came, but by his. By his atonement, conditional terms of pardon were made for us, and that without any work on our part.

It is by grace. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Grace is one among the first causes in man's justification. Some have the idea that it is mysteriously infused into the heart by a direct operation of God, when really it is an opportunity given man through Jesus Christ. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying unrighteousness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Tit. 2: 11, 12.) The grace of God comes with teachings and commands. When we accept the teachings and

obey the commands, we accept the grace given us through Jesus Christ.

Abraham is the representative character of the faithful. Adam is the representative character of the human family, by whose offense judgment came upon all men to condemnation. "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Adam's guilt had not been canceled. The whole world was under condemnation from this guilt. Jesus made atonement for all ages and all people. All the money of earth and all the works of all men combined cannot make or purchase atonement for sin; therefore it is by grace of God through Jesus Christ. It is true that death was passed upon all men, but the death of all men cannot atone for sin.

Under the law of Moses it was a matter of works—that of offering their own sacrifice of animals for sin. Christ has once for all made the offering for sin. Our only plea is Jesus Christ. He made the only sacrifice possible to take away sin. When we accept Christ, we accept his righteousness for our sins, and the Father accepts it as our righteousness, because we have accepted his Son. We accept Christ by doing the commands which God has made the conditions of salvation from our own personal guilt. The law of pardon is the out-growth of the righteous sacrifice of Jesus. In order for man to get to the Father for pardon,

he must go to him through the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ.

“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of no effect. For the promise, that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.”

The law of Moses was not of faith. It was never intended to take away sin. Not of faith, because Abraham looked beyond to the day of Christ. He saw the day of Christ and rejoiced. The law of Moses was no part of the promise to Abraham, but was introduced between the time of promise and its fulfillment. Sin set forth by law, and the impossibility of the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, was God’s way of teaching the world the need of a sacrifice that could really take away sin. The law was a schoolmaster.

It mattered not how anxious to be freed of sin and its memory, it could not be done under the law. There is no justification in the law of Moses for its atonement, for sin is defective. So the writer carries us back to the time of Abraham, who had faith in the promise of the coming Christ, who should be a blessing to all

nations. Abraham was justified through the righteousness of faith, without the works of the law, and so are we.

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed.” (Heb. 11: 8.) The necessity of obeying the commands is really a part of what he believed. His faith began with the promise and reached through the commands to the blessing. This is the kind of faith that justifies. He saw the blessings through obedience. The same is true to-day.

Abraham offered Isaac, and Paul says that it was “by faith.” (Heb. 11: 17.) James says “by works” he was justified. (James 2: 21.) How justified by faith and works? He believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead if slain. He believed that God would make good his promise with reference to his seed. He did what God told him. The deeds that James calls “works” were performed by faith. James tells what was done; Paul tells how done—by faith. James refers to the execution of the commands; Paul refers to the principle by which the commands were executed. Obeying commands is the execution of faith. We are justified by faith when the faith works, and the work is done. “By faith the walls of Jericho fell”—when the work was done. “By faith Moses, when he was born,

was hid three months." Leave off the hiding, and what would have become of little Moses?

The gospel compared to the law of Moses is not of works, but of grace—by grace through faith. By grace the law of pardon through Jesus Christ was given. And by faith we obey the commands of the law of pardon. That which man is required to do, compared to what God has done through Jesus Christ for man's justification, makes it by grace and not of works. But without obedience there is no life in the faith, and the grace of God disowned. Faith without works is dead, just as the body of man is dead without the spirit of life.

The children of Israel reached the Red Sea, with the enemy behind them. They were told to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. What did they see? The waters of the sea were divided. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land." Salvation was provided for them without any work on their part. The same is true of the justification of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Suppose the children of Israel had stood still on the banks after the waters were divided, making no effort to cross, would they have been delivered? The same is true of gospel salvation "by faith" and "by grace." "By faith they passed through." They believed God would hold back the walls of water until they could cross. Their work was to march in the

way of salvation. But what they had to do, compared with what the Lord had done for them, makes it by grace. If they had been required to turn the stream or dip the stream dry, they would have had something to do worthy of boasting. The same is true of gospel salvation.

Faith is the bedrock condition of man's justification, for it is the great moving principle of man. But the Book does not teach that justification is by *faith only*, nor by *grace only*, nor by *his blood only*; but it does teach that man is justified by faith, by grace, by his blood, by his resurrection. We are saved by the mercy of God, by repentance, by baptism, by hope; and still there are other elements in the gospel that saves. Each one is an important link in the chain of salvation. You may have *all faith*, so that you could remove mountains, and have not love, you are nothing. A faith that worketh by love counts for something. If *faith only* would justify, the devils would be justified, for they believe and tremble.

Paul was a mighty worker. No man ever planted the flag of purity of heart and life, personal responsibility, and the reward of labor higher than he. No soldier of the cross ever left the battlefield with as many stripes and wounds. No man ever sounded the depths of poverty and shame deeper than he in order to preach the gospel. He was allowed to write his

own epitaph. "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith." Amid the trials of life he was true to the gospel calls of duty. By faith he was permitted to see the silver blossoms and golden fruit that hang along the road to the city of God.

CHAPTER V.

FAITH—CONCLUDED.

Faith and works are so related, so vitally connected, that either alone is a failure. If a man were to tell you that he had faith in Jesus Christ and does not the things commanded, you would doubt his faith. If he should go through the form of obedience and deny that Jesus is the Son of God, his work would be a failure. It would be mockery. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Without faith there can be no obedience.

When Jesus promised eternal life to whosoever believeth in him, as in John 3: 15, 16, he includes the whole plan of salvation. Faith is often used in a generic sense. A man that believes in Jesus believes in his mission, commands, and promises. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common." (Acts 2: 44.) They had obeyed the law of pardon.

Abraham believed God and obeyed, and he was justified by the righteousness of faith. But the moment you cut off his obedience you kill his righteous faith. If works make faith

perfect, without works it is imperfect. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." A dead faith cannot be a justifying faith.

So when Jesus promises eternal life to whosoever believeth in him, he means that a man must execute his faith in obeying the commands given by the Master. The commission that Jesus gave the apostles is not a conflict with John 3: 15, 16, but an unfolding. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Why the unbeliever condemned? Because it is impossible for such a one to obey.

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3: 26, 27.) Verse 27 explains how they were children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Leave off verse 27, and you leave them without putting on Christ. A faith by which we become the children of God is one that leads us through obedience.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Heb. 11: 7.) God told Noah of the flood and what to do to be prepared. This he believed, and did what he believed, and became

an heir of righteousness “which is by faith.” Where did his faith begin and end? God told him of something not yet seen, and he believed it, which is the beginning. After the ark was built and the flood over and his life saved, the writer says that it was “by faith.” But, remember, there were one hundred and twenty years’ work in this faith. This is the kind of faith that justifies. Did Noah build the ark because he was already saved? No, he had the promise of salvation; but the promise made was conditioned on his building the ark, and he did the work by faith.

“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” The Lord gave him the instruction that made it possible for him to save his life. Noah accepted this grace, and by faith worked “according to all that God commanded him, so did he.” (Gen. 6: 22.) It took grace, faith, and works to build the ark; yet the writer says “by faith,” because it is the moving power.

Suppose Noah had left off building the ark, “faith only” would not have saved him. It is true that this occurred many years before New Testament times, but New Testament faith is the same, for it explains faith by this occurrence. Without the obedience of Noah, the grace of God would have been refused and his faith dead and worthless. The same is true of Paul’s statement: “Therefore being justified by faith.” It is by faith that a man’s work

is justified, and it is by works that a man's faith is justified. A faith that worketh by love leads to the highest order of obedience. Stronger the faith, greater the love; greater the love, stronger the faith. The Master's meat and drink was to do his Father's will. He had faith in the Father and loved him.

We are told of a second destruction, which will be by fire. We, like Noah, have been told what to do. If we obey, it will be a salvation by grace through faith. Taking God at his word, doing what he commands, expecting the blessings, is a faith that justifies. This is the Bible kind—this is the kind upon which Jesus promises eternal life to whosoever believeth in him.

Man is not a justified believer until he obeys the commands that God has given for justification. Noah was not a justified believer until he had put one hundred and twenty years' work in the commands. By faith his works were justified, and by his works his faith made perfect. The blind man who had faith in Jesus went to the pool of Siloam as commanded and washed, but he was not justified until he had washed, and would not have been unless he had gone and washed his eyes in that particular pool. By doing what Jesus commanded is believing in Jesus.

Faith makes a man bold in performance of duty. Fiery furnaces and darkened dungeons

are only a resting place. Violent threats, heated and hasty commands do not disturb. Opposition and persecution may come, but an ironclad faith in God's promises holds a man steady to the shore of eternal happiness. The victory is by faith. It puts the stamina of endurance into man. Faith is first and last, and runs through all commands. Obedience will not run without it. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

CHAPTER VI.

REPENTANCE.

Remember that the begotten of nature has growth before birth. Nature's law is adapted to give support to its begotten; so is the gospel, the law of spiritual birth, adapted to the support and growth of its begotten.

There is a law for natural birth, and there is a law for spiritual birth. Every command of God has a provision furnished for its acceptance and obedience. God did not command us to believe until he furnished the evidence for belief and what to believe. His commands are made within the scope of evidence.

When a man believes, and not until then, does he see the goodness of God and his own sinfulness and lost condition. This information comes to him through the word of God, and before there can be a conviction of sin he must believe it. Paul says the goodness of God leads to repentance. But how could a man know of the goodness of God in salvation and his own sinfulness unless he knows something of the word of God and believes it?

So when a man is commanded to repent, the

result of belief prepares him or places him in position to obey the command. We wish you to notice this preparation in the arrangement of God's commands. They are arranged in a consecutive order, just as the law of nature, for growth and natural birth.

The commands of God are not given in a reckless, meaningless way, without design and purpose, but with a dye as deep and as unchangeable as nature's law. Without this preparation, which is self-producing in the law of God, it is impossible to obey. How could a man repent that does not believe? It is as easy for a dead man to repent as it would be for a live man who does not believe. How can a man believe in him "of whom he has not heard?" What would such a man know about repentance? Between each command obeyed there is a result or growth that prepares for the next. The result from the obedience of the first command prepares for the second, and so on.

When a man is taught the gospel, he sees God in his purity; he sees Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father crowned King; he sees a power that outnumbers all combined armies of earth; he sees a justice from which no man can escape; he sees the mercy and goodness of God spreading over the wide world; he sees a love that washes every shore of humanity; he sees a righteous judgment that

is as deep as the lowest pits of hell and as high as the pinnacle of heaven. With this vision of the word of God, he begins to feel and see how unworthy his life has been; that he has been giving stones for bread.

“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Rom. 2: 4.) “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance. . . . For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.” (2 Cor. 7: 9, 10.) The goodness of God is manifest in the plan of salvation, and is calculated to arouse a new disposition and feeling toward God for his forbearance and long-suffering.

Godly sorrow is produced by having knowledge of the goodness of God and a realization of gross disobedience to the commands of God, who has so richly blessed us with spiritual opportunities. This godly sorrow produces a restless disposition, an uneasiness, discontentment, and a desire to be freed of a heavy burden. Godly sorrow cannot be produced without the existence of belief first.

Remember that godly sorrow for sin is not repentance, but “worketh repentance;” that without godly sorrow there is no repentance—it must precede. Do you not see the intervening growth between belief and repentance?

On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 38) Peter told those people about the goodness of God in blessing the world by giving to it a Savior, and that they had by wicked hands crucified the Lord, and they believed what Peter said; the piercing testimony pricked their hearts, and they cried out: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said: "Repent."

Let us take an example to arrive at the definition of the word. "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not." (Matt. 21: 28-30.)

What did the first son say? That he would not go. No doubt he thought of the hardships connected with the vineyard, and possibly the pleasures that he would miss at home. All this was too great for him at that time.

After the father left, he, no doubt, thought of the injustice and began to feel sorry for his conduct. After thinking it over, he "repented, and went." What did he do? He changed his mind, his purpose. What he first refused to do he is now willing to do. Note, he "repented" and went. His going is not a part of his repentance, but a result. He repented, and the going follows.

When our Heavenly Father comes to us telling us to give up sinful pleasures and the love and works of the world and do the work in his vineyard, we, too, are put to a test like the first son. A decision is to be made.

Repentance is a make up of mind to forsake the wrong and do the right. Every command has choice in it. When a man repents, he has a mind made up to a full and complete surrender of his own will and a full acceptance of the will of God. It is not a few resolutions, but a mind made up like flint and steel against the wrong and for the right.

If the first son had gone and worked at first, repent would not have been in it. We have treated our Heavenly Father like these two sons. Some repent and go work; others never enter the vineyard. "Go and work" was the command. We repeat, when this son repented he had not gone. He had only settled in mind to go and work. The going and work come after his repentance.

We find in the Book where it is stated that "God repented." God pronounced a destruction upon Nineveh, but they *repented* at the preaching of Jonah. They made up their minds to serve God—to turn from their evil ways. What they did was the fruits of their repentance. Then God repented—he changed his purpose, his decree. Man by his obedience or his disobedience changes his relation to God.

It is pleasing to God for man to obey. When the world became so wicked that God repented that he had made man, it grieved him at heart.

“For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” (Heb. 12: 17.) Esau had sold his birthright. He afterwards realized its worth and saw his mistake. Isaac, his father, had pronounced the blessing upon Jacob. When Isaac found out the mistake, he trembled very exceedingly. “Esau sought repentance with tears, but found none.” What did Esau do? He went to his father, crying and begging him to bless him. He wanted his father to change his mind and give him the blessing. This is what he sought with tears. He was seeking to change the mind of his father.

“Well,” says one, “does not repentance come before belief?” and quotes Mark 1: 15: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” John the Baptist stood between the going out of the law and the coming in of the new kingdom. His work was “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” John, by his work and teaching, persuaded many of the coming Christ. Their repentance and baptism was a heart-and-life preparation and a test of their belief in the coming Savior. “John verily bap-

tized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." (Acts 19: 4.) When Jesus came, delivered his gospel, and the kingdom was set up, belief in him comes first. We are to believe in him who has come.

Repentance is not prayer. Some seem to think the question of salvation can be settled by asking God to forgive them, believing that when it is done it is done. Under the new dispensation we find no such authority for an alien sinner.

In the book of Acts, the book of conversions, we find over twenty cases. At this time the apostles are out preaching the doctrine of the kingdom, men being convicted of sin, asking what to do to be saved. Not one is told to pray. Did not the apostles believe in prayer? Certainly. They taught that all men should be prayed for; but they did not teach, nor did they pray, that God might speak peace and pardon to their souls before they obeyed the gospel. Why not? They had no such instructions for salvation. They had the gospel, which has commands to be obeyed in order to have salvation from past sins. We know of no set of men that could prevail with God in prayer more than the apostles, but they did not call men around them and tell them to pray.

earnestly for pardon, and they would also ask God to speak peace and pardon to their souls.

Paul said: "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." We do not believe that God has to be plead with and be persuaded by the pleadings of man to make God willing to save man. God is ready, willing, and anxious to save man. He wants man to obey the commands given for that purpose. Man is the one that needs to change, and the gospel is the power. He is to obey the gospel, and that was what Paul persuaded men to do.

The apostles did not seem to know anything about praying a man "through." We have seen men brought to weeping by hearing the tender appeals of God through the gospel, and then honest men pray that God speak peace and pardon to their souls before obeying the conditions of pardon.

It is true that when a godly man is pleading, expressing his desire for salvation of sinners, that serious, sober thoughts are brought to bear upon the sinner's heart. When a godly man is talking to God in tenderness in behalf of a man's soul, the man listening may be deeply impressed with the desire and need of salvation. But such pleadings are not for God to become willing to save, but for man to take God at his word and do his will—that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The divine plan is that the gospel be preached, believed, and obeyed.

We have seen stout-hearted men weep and agonize at the altar. This is the work of godly sorrow that worketh repentance, and is often mistaken for conversion. There must be a conviction of sin and a godly sorrow before there can be a repentance. On the day of Pentecost the people were not asked to come for prayers; but when they believed Peter's preaching, they cried out: "What shall we do?" Godly sorrow was working rapidly upon these people. At this stage they were not saved, but only ready to repent, and that was the first thing commanded.

Jesus met Saul on the way to Damascus. He had been told to go to this place and there he would be told what to do. Saul goes, and fasts and prays for three days. Did Jesus tell him to do this? We believe that when a man finds himself in the wrong, as did Saul, that it is natural for such a man to cry for mercy. Such acts are natural for a man passing through the stages of godly sorrow.

Suppose Saul had continued in prayer after Ananias had told him what to do, refusing to obey as commanded, what would have been the result? So far as we know, he would have died outside of the kingdom. Saul might have prayed until his hair turned white and all fell off, but unless he had obeyed as Ananias com-

manded, he would have died outside of the kingdom.

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” (Acts 17: 30.) Repentance is a commanded duty—something for man to do. God does not repent for man, but has made it possible for man by gospel law. “All men everywhere.” How many does that leave out?

How long does it take a man to repent? On the day of Pentecost the three thousand completed the requirements of the commission, repentance being included. Jesus says if thy brother trespass against you seven times in one day and turn to you and say, “I repent,” you must forgive him. Repentance does not mean a reformation of life, for the time is too short for much in the above quotations. It is a decision for a reformation, and is expected to follow.

When the *prodigal* son said, “I will arise,” the experience of so much sorrow helped him in making a decision to return to his father’s house. The circumstances that entered the life of this son made up the conditions that worked up the change of mind. His condition became a burden. To this was added his feeling of unworthiness to return. In all genuine repentance there is this same experience. Godly sorrow works upon man until he desires a change.

When he has fully decided to make the change, he has repented. The decision is the turning point for a godly life.

Doing the commands of God is a result of repentance. Bringing forth fruit is a proof of repentance. The doing is not the decision, but the execution. When an alien sinner repents, he is not pardoned. He is now willing and anxious to do what God requires of him in order to be pardoned. He is yet to be born of water and of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GREAT COMMISSION.

This is the greatest declaration ever made to mortal man. It contains the elements and conditions of salvation. It is the matured purposes and plan of God for man's redemption. The types and shadows of the Old Testament point to this time. What follows is the outgrowth and development of this commission.

We think an examination of what is known as the "great commission" given to the apostles, and the way each writer states it, will be helpful in our understanding the plan of salvation.

Matt. 28: 19, 20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Mark 16: 15, 16: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Luke 24: 46, 47: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and

that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

The conditions of salvation from past sins to every creature are the same. The apostles were sent to preach "the gospel," not gospels. It is wonderful, for it is the power of God unto salvation. God had been maturing his purposes for ages. Something great had been accomplished for the world. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." That means something. It is great and glorious to think of. The man that tries to change it, rather than obey it, will have an awful fate.

Matthew does not mention *belief* and *repentance*. Mark gives *belief* and *baptism*. Luke gives *repentance* and "that remission of sins should be preached in his name." We do not understand that one was to preach *repentance* and leave out *baptism*; that another was to preach *baptism* and leave out *belief* and *repentance*.

The apostles understood the items of the commission alike, but it is the will of God that it be thus written. One strong proof of the inspiration of the word of God is that the writers wrote at different times, lived at different times and places, but no contradiction—nothing in *Genesis* to contradict the writings of *Matthew*, and so on.

Suppose *Matthew*, *Mark*, and the other writ-

ers of the New Testament had written the same things, using the very same words, the world would have said some one copied. As it is, there is agreement, each supplementing, and being so interwoven that we have one gospel, requiring what all say, and how they say it, to make the one gospel. This is one feature of the Scriptures that makes its study attractive. Herein is shown the wisdom of God in revelation.

The apostles were told to wait at Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high. That power came according to promise. The Spirit was to bring to their remembrance whatsoever Jesus had commanded them, guide them into all truth, and even show them things to come.

Unto Peter was given the keys of the kingdom. He was first to express the conditions of entering the kingdom of God. The kingdom door was opened that day, and has never been closed since. The commission was divinely attested that the world might know and believe that the terms of salvation are God-given—substantiating the claim that Jesus had made, that he had all power in heaven and earth to make such a proclamation for salvation.

What did Peter tell those who asked what to do? Are we not expected to find the terms of salvation as given by Jesus to the apostles

in Peter's answer? May we not even find the order of the conditions? Matthew, Mark, and Luke give the items—repentance, baptism, and belief—and the promise of salvation. But we want to know which comes first, second, and third. If we should be able to so find in the preaching of the apostles, that should forever settle it. If we examine the first admission into the kingdom, may we not expect to have the answer, and that by divine authority?

In Acts 2: 14-36 we have a part of Peter's sermon. Verse 37 says: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" What was it that caused them to ask this question? "Now when they heard this"—that is, what Peter had told them concerning Jesus. The question was asked because they believed what Peter had said. Their hearts were pricked, which could not have been unless they had believed. You will observe in the answers of the apostles throughout their preaching to persons asking what to do that the answer is made to suit the present condition of the inquirer.

Peter's answer on the day of Pentecost was: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2: 38.) Why not tell them to

pray until the Father assured them that he had saved them? Why not tell them that they were already saved, and if they were not, that they could do nothing to be saved? Because not according to what they were commanded to preach.

The only command given in the commission not mentioned in Peter's answer is belief. But they had already believed, for they were pricked in heart and asked what to do to be saved. They could not repent and be baptized until they believed. So the order of the commands are belief, repentance, and baptism.

Luke says: "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Is not "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2: 38) the same as Luke's "remission of sins" (Luke 24: 47)? Both follow repentance. Luke, instead of saying "be baptized," as did Matthew and Mark, gives the result, "remission of sins"—the same as Mark's salvation.

Luke says that Jerusalem is the place of beginning. Matthew says the end of the world is the duration of the commission. Take the conditions, time, and place of the commission and compare with Peter's answer the time and place and conditions, and we have the same thing. The anxiety on the part of those on the day of Pentecost to know what to do indicates an uneasy, restless condition, which, of course,

is the result of believing. So Peter had the commission in full that day.

Belief refers to their accepting the truths of God as being true, and their repentance to an act of mind, deciding to do what they were commanded; so they gladly received the word of God and were baptized the same day and were added to the saved. (Acts 2: 41.) Whose word did they gladly receive? The Lord's. Is a man added before his sins are remitted? How is it in the commission? Salvation after baptism. Did not Peter place remission of sin after baptism?

Who added them, and how? God does the adding through Jesus Christ by his appointed law. Children of nature are added to nature's kingdom by appointed law. The gospel teaches very forcibly the divine elements in salvation. But man's obedience is just as clearly and as forcibly taught. Without grace, mercy, and the blood of Jesus Christ there is no salvation. Without faith, repentance, and baptism there is no salvation. By uniting human and divine agencies, remission of sin is as certain for us as it was on the day of Pentecost.

Had you ever thought about what there is in the commission? God so loved the world—his mercy, his grace, his Spirit, and Jesus Christ, with his life, his death, his blood, his resurrection, and all power in heaven and

earth—the commands believe, repent, and baptism—salvation being the result.

The cases of pardon during the ministry of Jesus on earth were special and not intended for models after the kingdom was set up, but to prove his Sonship. He performed many miracles, and were written that we might believe. Some think that they can be saved as was the *thief* on the cross. But this is one of the special cases, and occurred before the commission was given. Suppose the commission had been given and the thief was living under the new law of pardon given to the apostles, do you believe the Lord would have saved him? To say that he would conflicts with the plan of salvation given the apostles to be preached to every creature. The day of special cases is past, and every man of every nation is to obey the commands alike. The commission is still living, and will live as long as the grace of Jesus.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONVERSION.

We wish to follow the apostles in their teaching the great commission and note some of the conversions recorded in Acts of the Apostles. This book is the history of their first work, forming the first organization of the church. Leave out Acts of the Apostles, and we would have no exposition of the commission. It is their superstructure of the commission.

ANANIAS AND SAUL (Acts 22: 16).—“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” We have only one given command—“be baptized.” When Saul met the Lord and heard his voice, he said: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Jesus told him why he appeared to him, and then told him to go to Damascus and there he would be told what to do. Saul went to get the information. Proof that Jesus is the Son of God was what Saul needed to begin the change; and as soon as Jesus made himself known, he had the proof.

Ananias told him to be baptized. Why not

tell him to believe and repent? This he had done. Baptism was all he needed in order to be pardoned. His sins had not been forgiven when Ananias went to him, for they were not washed away in baptism. The words, "wash away thy sins" denote a moving not by water, but by obedience to the command ordained of God for pardon, he reached the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. No man is literally washed in the blood of Jesus. Its efficacy, by the power of God, is in the commands given for man's salvation. The law of pardon is the result of his shed blood.

THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER (Acts 16: 31).—The jailer said to Paul and Silas: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." This answer, according to the teaching of the Book, is correct. A man that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ believes his commands and by faith obeys the commands, expecting the blessing of salvation.

What did Paul and Silas do after telling him to believe? "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." They gave something to be believed by speaking to them the word of the Lord.

And the same hour of the night he and all his straightway were baptized. Then the jailer brought them into his house, gave them something to eat, "and rejoiced, believing in

God with all his house." So their baptism was included in their belief on the Lord Jesus Christ. Why not rejoice before baptism? They were not justified believers until they had obeyed. Without faith they could not have obeyed, yet it was not by *faith only*. You leave out their baptism, and you put an end to their faith and silence their rejoicing.

On the day of Pentecost they were told to repent and be baptized. Ananias told Saul to be baptized. The jailer was told to believe. Three different answers to the three different parties. The apostles knew what answers to make. Also did Ananias. We have belief, repentance, and baptism at Pentecost; belief, repentance, and baptism on the part of Saul; belief and baptism on the part of the jailer. Do you think Paul and Silas left out repentance to the jailer? We believe they preached the gospel plan of salvation, and that repentance was included in "the word of the Lord" spoken to him.

PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH (Acts 8: 28-40). —"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" How did the eunuch know it is necessary? Philip had "preached unto him Jesus." (Verse 35.) Nothing is said about repentance and belief, but we believe Philip preached the gospel. The eunuch's calling

Philip's attention to "a certain water" is proof of a teaching, and also an expression of his willingness to obey.

PHILIP AT SAMARIA (Acts 8: 5-12).—"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Do you think Philip left out repentance? We believe he stuck to the text. What did he preach? "The things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ."

The same is true of Simeon. He believed and was baptized.

PAUL AND CRISPUS (Acts 18: 8).—"And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Nothing is said about repentance. Did Paul forget it? We believe he stuck to the text, for he "reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath."

If Luke had given in detail every conversion, we would have a history of repetitions, so much so that it would be contrary to good authorship. So by divine revelation we have a diversified account. Whatever item that seems to be omitted in any case of conversion was included, for the commission is the great central text. The apostles were never told to change it, and

it stands to-day by the authority of Jesus Christ.

FIVE THOUSAND MEN (Acts 3: 19; 4: 4).—This passage (3: 19) may appear as being out of harmony with the other answers: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” Because Peter was preaching the resurrection from the dead, the priest, captain, and Sadducees became enraged and put Peter and John in prison. “Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.” At Pentecost and on this occasion Peter gave in part the same arguments prior to giving the commands. There was preaching, hearing, and believing on both occasions.

Let us compare the stated commands as given on the two occasions—Acts 2: 38; 3: 19. “Repent” in both means the same. The words “be converted” in Peter’s second sermon occupy the same place as “be baptized” as given in his first. They both follow “repent.” Baptism is the converting act. It completes the process; it completes the requirements of the commission, and is in harmony with Peter’s first sermon. It is “for the remission of sins.” Remission of sins certainly leaves man in a new condition and relation.

“Converted” means a change, and conver-

sion is in process before man is converted. From clay brick are made. The clay is changed from one use to another. We convert logs into lumber and lumber into furniture. Rough rock are chiseled and dressed into monuments of beauty. A man changed from a sinner condemned to a pardoned man is conversion. Conviction of sin is not conversion, but a part of the process. A man converted is freed of conviction.

The Revised Version has the words "turn again" instead of "be converted" following *repent*. Repentance is a decision for a turn, and baptism is the command by which the *turn* is made. It was so at Pentecost. When a man is baptized, he has been converted, he has turned again for, or unto, remission of sins—turned from his condemnation to salvation.

Peter is, therefore, justifiable in changing the phraseology, as it does not change the meaning. The change was made by divine authority, and in this way we have a diversified account of conversion. "Be baptized," "be converted," "turn again," following "repent," mean the same, and conform to the commission, the nucleus of their preaching.

What difference in meaning "for the remission of sins" and "and that your sins may be blotted out?" None. Two different groups of words conveying the idea of pardon. What is the difference in "ye shall receive the gift of

the Holy Spirit" and "when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord?" None. Two groups of words denoting the coming of the Holy Spirit as an abiding Comforter; a manifest token of God's acceptance into a new spiritual relation; a seal of promise.

It is necessary that every item of the commission be preached, and we believe they were; yet to avoid a series of repetitions, omissions were made by the historian. But every conversion conforms to the commission. You cannot leave out belief and preach a full gospel; you cannot leave out repentance and preach a full gospel; you cannot leave out baptism and preach a full gospel. What is true of the preacher is also true of the man obeying.

CHAPTER IX.

BORN OF WATER.

There is something about being born of water that authorized Jesus to put stress upon it. The man that raises his hand in objection to this command is in more danger than the man who raised his hand to steady the ark. Jesus told Nicodemus unless done man cannot enter the kingdom of God, and we believe it.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” This baptismal formula means something. It is by the authority and a signified approval of the God-head. It means a concurrence in commanding and the purpose for which commanded. In this act man meets the combined efforts and influence of heavenly power for pardon and salvation.

There is a special fixed purpose in the act of baptism, or being born of water. It has a divine significance that stands for something, and that something is as important and necessary as God in his wisdom could devise for the salvation of man. We believe the Lord insti-

tuted the simplest, the wisest, the only available means in keeping with justice, being perfectly adapted to form new life and new principles. In other words, the law of spiritual life is embodied in commands, and these commands obeyed is the law of begetting, growth, and birth. God's power of spiritual life is through the law of life, just as the natural child is of the law of nature.

The significance of baptism was not made known to the first Christians, so far as we know. The wisdom of inspiration holds it for a later date. Peter did not tell the three thousand why be baptized, except "for the remission of sins." The significance is not even given in the commission. Salvation is the promise. We wish to study the significance, and ask your attention first to Rom. 6: 1-12.

In the first three verses of this chapter the writer asked the following questions: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" The expression, "were baptized into his death," seems to be the thought emphasized. It is the climax of the writer's argument for impressing upon them the solemn obligation for purity of life; that its significance is deep and their walk in life should conform to the solemn obligation.

After asking the above question, the writer begins his explanation. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

We call your attention to three acts that form a part or are associated with baptism. There is a crucifixion, a burial, and a resurrection. Man is to be crucified with him, buried with him, and raised up with him. Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. Man must pass through the same ordeal to be in his likeness.

How is the old man of sin crucified? By repentance. A mind determined to serve God, let come what may, crucifies the old man, with his affections and lust for sin. The spiritual begotten has grown until he has prevailing power and influence, and conquers and crucifies the old man of sin, and carries him to the waters of baptism for a burial. No man is a fit subject of baptism until there is a death of the body of sin. It is the dead crucified body that is buried, just as the dead body of Jesus.

Baptism not only signifies a death to sin, but is a burial of the person dead to sin. It not only signifies a burial of the person dead to sin, but a resurrection from the dead. The crucifixion of the old man of sin must be as real as was the crucifixion of Jesus. The burial of the person dead to sin must be as real as the burial of Jesus. The resurrection of the burial by baptism with him will be as real as was that of Jesus.

Baptism of the commission is the same as *born of water* as given to Nicodemus. The commission goes more into detail and gives the preparatory steps for baptism. Jesus told Nicodemus the necessity of the new birth, and afterwards gave the apostles the conditions of the necessary preparation and growth prior to the birth. Who but God could foresee eyes in spittle and clay and a washing at the pool? Who but God could foresee a new birth of water? Born of water as was Jesus born of the grave.

“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” (Col. 2: 12.) Do you not see the great spiritual significance of baptism again repeated in the burial and resurrection? We are raised with Christ Jesus “through the faith of the operation of God.” Unless man believes that he will be raised a new creature, he will

not be raised, for he must have faith in the operation of God. If he is baptized believing that God will raise him up, it will be done, for this is the promise. Man is to believe in the appointed ways of God, just as did the leper who washed seven times. Man is to have faith in the operation of God, just as the people who marched around the walls of Jericho. The operation of God is the power that does the work, but this work is done for those who have faith in the appointed way, and thereby meets God in his appointments. We know of no command in which a greater faith is required than in baptism. To be raised up from the grave of water, a new creature in Christ, is a greater work than opening the eyes of the blind and throwing down walled cities.

“Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?” (1 Cor. 15: 29.) Paul’s argument is, if there be no resurrection, there is no need of baptism, for it is useless and meaningless. If no resurrection, no salvation. “Ye are yet in your sins.” In this passage the significance is made prominent.

CHAPTER X.

BORN OF WATER—CONCLUDED.

Baptism has a deep spiritual significance, more than the world seems to realize. The confusion brought about by mode—that is, whether it is by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling—has beclouded the religious world until its divine significance is covered in the trash pile of contention and strife. Baptism has no modes. If pouring, if sprinkling, if immersion are modes, what is baptism? The Book says nothing about mode; it is simply baptism. It took place at a “certain water,” where there was “much water;” in the “Jordan river” and “pools;” that the candidate went to the water, “down into the water,” then “up out of the water,” and Paul says they “were buried.”

“Well,” says one, “what about the children of Israel, who were baptized unto Moses, in the cloud, and in the sea?” This is figurative, as was the baptism of suffering that came upon the Savior. There was neither immersion, pouring, nor sprinkling of water in this baptism. They passed over dry. Notice the wording: “And were all baptized unto Moses,

in the cloud, and in the sea." Unto Moses as leader; the walls of water stood up on both sides; the cloud stood over them and coming down so as to cover them; they were hid from the view of the Egyptian by water and cloud; baptized from the view of the enemy in the cloud and sea.

The water grave, from which we are raised, "born of water," is a symbol of the grave of Jesus, and nothing but a burial by baptism will correspond to the design. The design fixes the mode. It fits like a miter sealed by the eternal power of God. On account of sin Jesus was crucified, and God has ordained that man must meet Jesus Christ in the grave for pardon. He must be born of water to enter the kingdom of God.

We think one more passage sufficient to make clear its significance: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 3: 21.) Baptism now saves us. He does not mean that it is all. If it had not been for the grace and mercy of God, we would not have the opportunity of baptism. If it had not been for the love of the Father, there would have been no grace. If there is no faith and repentance, there can be no baptism. So it is not all, but it has an important part in

salvation, and no important part can be left out. "God so loved the world," but that love does not save direct. God is merciful, but that mercy does not save direct. The commands obeyed work out the purpose designed by the commander.

Let us return to Peter's statement: "Even baptism doth also now save us." But how? "By the resurrection of Jesus Christ." In order to get the proper connection we will give the verse above. Peter, in speaking of those who lived at the time of the flood, says: "Which some time were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water." How were the eight souls saved? By water. How were the rest destroyed? By water. Water saved and water destroyed. What was the difference? By faith and obedience to God the eight souls went into the ark. The ark saved. How? As the water was rising for destruction, the same water was raising the ark for salvation. Being in the ark saved. It was the raising of the ark that saved. The water that raised the ark saved. The eight souls were saved "by water."

We again wish to call your attention to the resurrection being associated with baptism. It now saves us "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Peter is now referring to the last

part in baptism—the resurrection. Do not get the idea that “the like figure” saves, for it is baptism. What is the “like figure?” A flood was coming. An ark was to be built and the people to go in. Unless the ark had been raised, the eight that went in would have been lost. Unless Christ had been raised from the dead, there would be no salvation. Noah’s ark was raised, so has Jesus Christ been raised. As water saved the eight, so we are saved by baptism. Being baptized into Jesus Christ, and he having been raised from the dead, we are raised up with him, as they were raised by the ark—they in Noah’s ark and we in Christ, our ark.

Peter does not mention the flood and baptism in connection to emphasize the wonders of the flood, but uses the wonderful results of the flood in emphasizing baptism—showing that it is just as necessary to be baptized into Christ in order to be saved from the destruction of sin as it was for them to get into the ark to be saved from the destruction of the deluge. What holds good for their salvation is just as binding upon us in the “like figure.” It is just as reasonable to do away with the ark, their going into the ark, and it being raised, and save them, as it is for us to do away with baptism and the resurrection of Jesus and our being raised with him, and save us.

Paul and Peter teach the same thing about

its importance and significance. Peter takes the resurrection feature and explains it by the flood and ark; Paul deals with the crucifixion, burial, and a resurrection.

Let us examine the parenthetical clause of verse 21—"not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." Question: Could any one get the idea of putting away the filth of the flesh, unless baptism is by immersion? No such an idea comes or could come from pouring or sprinkling. Do you suppose Peter would have said a word about the filth of the flesh if baptism is by sprinkling or pouring? This is proof that he knew of but one way, and that there is only one way, and that one way might suggest to some the idea of putting away the filth of the flesh. So he makes this statement to show that this is not the purpose, but that it has a deeper design than putting away the filth of the flesh. Does not the idea of a burial, a resurrection, and the statement in reference to putting away the filth of the flesh put it beyond controversy as to the so-called "mode?"

Some seem to have the idea that the answer of a good conscience toward God in baptism refers to a choice as to how they prefer to be baptized—whether by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling; that if their conscience is satisfied with sprinkling for baptism, that makes it all right. But that is not the teaching. We have

noticed what it is not for—putting away the filth of the flesh. Then for what purpose? “But the answer of a good conscience toward God.” It being the last command for an alien sinner for remission of sins, the answer of a good conscience toward God is made when it is performed.

This answer of a good conscience is not said to be made by belief and repentance. They are steps on the way. Why not made? Because the answer is not complete, for it takes baptism, the last command for an alien sinner to be pardoned. That the answer of a good conscience toward God is made by baptism is proof that it is the last act for pardon, for that completes the answer, and what completes the answer completes the requirements. The sure way is good enough, and the questionable unsatisfactory to a good conscience in making this answer.

It was not until Christ had passed the crucifixion, the burial, and resurrection that salvation was proclaimed to a lost world. They were essential in the scheme of redemption in perfecting the conditions whereby man might be saved. The life of Christ could only satisfy the law of justice to such an extent that if man would pass through the same ordeal that he would be pardoned. Hence we have commands to obey. A crucifixion, a burial, and a resurrection are as essential to the sal-

vation of man as was the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Jesus in perfecting the conditions by which man could be pardoned. Man was not saved when Christ was raised from the dead, but he had made it possible.

Up to the present we have made no distinction between baptism and being born of water. But there is this difference: Man is buried in baptism before he is born of water. He cannot be born of water unless baptized. Born of water is the work of God in raising him up from the dead. When raised, he is born of water, as was Jesus born of the grave.

CHAPTER XI.

BORN OF THE SPIRIT.

The birth of water and of the Spirit are so closely related that you cannot mention one without implying the other. Birth itself is a transition. Man is translated from one stage to another and from one kingdom to another—from a child of the world to a child of God. This birth is as much by law as that of the natural child.

Where the idea comes that man is born of the Spirit first and enters the kingdom of God before he obeys the law of pardon, is something we have never understood. If man is born of the Spirit first, and God gives this direct, why preach the gospel to be obeyed for the remission of sins? At Pentecost, when Peter told those people who cried out, "What shall we do?" would you claim that they were born of the Spirit before they repented and were baptized? If so, they were in the kingdom of God before their sins were remitted. Were they not told what to do in order to have remission of sin? When they obeyed, they were pardoned and raised up and translated into

the kingdom of God. Jesus put the birth of the Spirit after born of water, and no man can change it. Man could as easily change the position of stars.

The birth of the Spirit is not independent of what man is required to do. It is the result of a spiritual begetting by the word of God conceived in the heart and a growth through obedience to the commands. We must not mistake the begetting for the birth. Repentance is a growth after the begetting. The birth of water and of the Spirit, after repentance.

If Nicodemus had been present at Pentecost and had done what Peter commanded, would he not have been added with the three thousand? Would he not have been born of the water and of the Spirit? Would he not have understood more clearly what a man must do to enter the kingdom of God? The birth of water and of the Spirit is something that God does for man, and that when man has obeyed the commands.

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.” (Rom. 6: 17.) Note: (1) A doctrine was delivered—the gospel was preached; (2) they obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine—something in the doctrine to be obeyed. What the result? “Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

What made them free from sin? What had they done to be freed? "Obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine." Does not their freedom follow their obedience? To obey from the heart implies a knowledge of the form, a willingness to obey, and the act of obedience. You take obedience out of salvation, and you will have condemnation left. "And having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." Jesus is the author of salvation through obedience. We know of no other way.

Paul was sent to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins." He had the gospel, the power of God, with which to do this work. Man is not saved until after he turns. The gospel tells man how to turn, from what to turn, and to what turn. He turns in obedience from the power of Satan unto God. Man is not benefited by commands until he obeys them.

"Obedience to the faith" is the same as obeying from the heart "that form of doctrine," which is the same as the commission given to the apostles; the same that Peter preached at Pentecost, "for the remission of sins;" the same as "being then made free from sin." The commands of God are the channels into which and through which the power of God through

Jesus Christ for salvation reaches man. The commands are the outlets of his redeeming grace. By virtue of the blood of the Son of God we have commands containing the essence and cleansing power of Calvary's cross. So the new birth is the result of obedience to the gospel.

Paul, in speaking of raising from the dead the person buried with Jesus in baptism, does not refer to the man who does the baptizing assisting or raising the body of the man baptized; but there is an actual raising up of the new man, the old man having been buried with Christ.

God did not raise Jesus until buried. He was quickened by the power of God in resurrection. The moment that man is thus buried God raises him up with Jesus, a new creature, born of water and of the Spirit, and is a babe of the spiritual kingdom. Baptism sustains the same relation to the birth of the Spirit as a burial to a resurrection.

We are not to understand that the Holy Spirit gives birth as a mother, for the Spirit is designated as masculine gender—"he;" but that spiritual seed grow up in man, forming a spiritual being; that this new being is created by the Father through spiritual law, just as we are created by natural law; that spiritual purity and spiritual likeness are transmitted to the spiritual born, as the likeness of father

and mother to their offspring. Those born of the flesh have characteristic features of the flesh; those born of the Spirit of God have characteristic resemblances of purity and likeness of the divine. This relationship is spiritual, and not of the flesh.

But man is not ready for the new birth, neither is he born, until there is a death and a burial. The first stage of spiritual life begins with primary belief, and must grow until there is a death and a burial. As the spiritual begotten begins to grow, the old man of sin begins to weaken; and this process must continue until there is a crucifixion and a burial. The old life must come to an end before there can be a new man raised by the mighty power of God in resurrection. The commands, when obeyed, produce just such results of life and death as are required preparatory to the new birth. Herein we see the wisdom of God in the plan of salvation. There is nothing else to produce such results. It is the law ordained of God.

The New Testament is sealed, ratified, and sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ, as was the law of Moses by the blood of animals. When we do what he has commanded for the remission of sins, then we reach the merits of Jesus' blood. Was not his blood shed when the three thousand were told what to do? Were they pardoned before or after they obeyed?

The grave of Jesus is the most wonderful

grave ever made. From it life and immortality were brought to light through the gospel. Through this grave comes hope and sunlight of the glory world. Instead of being a grave of darkness and death, it is a grave of light and life. It is the gateway for sinful man into the kingdom of God. We verily believe that for man to enter the kingdom of God, he must pass through this grave in the likeness of Jesus Christ. What the Father required to make perfect the plan of salvation, the same is now required of man in the plan of salvation. We are to be crucified with him, buried with him in baptism, and raised up with him.

Man is dead to the glory of the next world until he has been pardoned, and alive with new spiritual life and power when pardoned. He may believe, repent, and be baptized; but he is not saved until God pardons. But the moment the conditions are met, pardon takes place with God. When man is buried with Christ in baptism, God raises him up from this grave as he did Jesus, and he is as truly born of water as Jesus was born of the grave. This is the "born of water" as was told Nicodemus.

What is the birth of the Spirit? As we have stated, spiritual seed—seed of the kingdom of God—must first be sown in the heart. From spiritual seed a new life begins. This new life grows by obeying the gospel, which is God's law for growth preparatory for a birth, just

as the natural law of mothers for their unborn.

When there is a death and a burial of the old man, there is a new man raised up, a pardoned man, one accepted of God, and he is translated into the kingdom of God. This is the birth of the Spirit of God. He is a new man and in a new kingdom—born anew, and that from above. This invisible birth into an invisible kingdom is marvelous, for it is the mighty works of God's power.

“Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

CHAPTER XII.

CONFESSiON.

So far as we have been able to understand the New Testament, the church of Jesus Christ is built upon one article of faith. Jesus said to his disciples: "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." He then turns the question direct to them: "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16: 13-18.)

What is the rock upon which the church is built? "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The word "it" in verse 17 refers to the truth confessed by Peter, and not to the

fact that the revelation was made by the Father. The truth revealed by the Father, confessed by Peter, is the rock.

Jesus is not the *rock*, but the builder of his church. Peter is not the *rock*, as the Church of Rome would have you believe. "Peter" in the original means a "stone." He is so named in John 1: 42. But the church is not built upon *petros* ("Peter," a "stone"), but "upon this *petra* [a mountain ledge] I will build my church." The truth that Jesus is the Son of God is the *petra* (foundation rock) upon which the church is built. This scripture clearly reverses the claims of Rome. Everything pertaining to the church depends upon Jesus being the Son of God. It is the foundation for the whole Christian system. Upon this truth, and not Peter, the church stands or falls. Peter never claimed to be a pope, but an apostle.

You may compile all the articles of faith of the world, but "thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," outweighs them all. It is the most comprehensive and far-reaching statement ever made. The whole scheme of redemption of the past, present, and future is included in the statement.

Moses cast down a rod, and it became a serpent. So did the Egyptians, but the serpent of Moses swallowed theirs. You may have a line of articles of faith reaching from New Orleans to New York, but this one, "thou art the

Christ, the Son of the living God," will swallow every one of them. There is as much difference as in "petros" and "petra."

Jesus said, "I will build my church"—not "churches." Division is proof that error exists. We have direction for only one church. The man who thanks God for a divided church does not pray like our Master.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Jesus Christ is to be confessed as Lord, and not Peter nor the pope.

This confession is something that no man will escape. Every tongue will confess "that Jesus Christ is Lord." Every man that refuses to confess the *One highly exalted* will in the next world confess him, and, for his shameful neglect of the redeeming grace of God through Jesus Christ, cry for the rocks and hills to fall upon him.

In the *great commission*, confession is not mentioned. So far as we know, all churches take what is called a "confession" before church membership. Why not mentioned? The relation that repentance sustains to baptism makes confession a duty intervening, and

becomes self-explanatory. A man may repent anywhere all alone, but he will make his intentions known. When his mind is fully made up, he will express it. "Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh." His intentions cannot be pent up any longer. Up to this time he has withheld his mental decision, but before he can go any further something is to be said and done. To obey the command of baptism calls forth an expression. It serves as a medium of an understanding between the candidate for baptism and the man who is to do the baptizing. This is true of Philip and the eunuch. Confession of an alien sinner is an act between repentance and baptism. There is where this chapter comes in, but we thought best to introduce it later.

Suppose A preaches, and at the close of his sermon gives an invitation for membership, and B comes up. B could speak out voluntarily and say: "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God." That would be his confession. Or A might ask B the question: "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God?" If B should say, "I do," that would be his confession.

This is the great test question. No man can enter his church and deny that fact. Man may confess his sins to God and his faults before man, but he must confess that Jesus is the Son of God before man before he can be saved.

“Upon this rock” his church is built. If he is not the Son of God, there is no church.

“Well,” says one, “do you believe the apostles heard a confession on the day of Pentecost?” Why not? Was it not to them an intervening, individual duty standing before their baptism? When they repented, their minds were made up to be baptized, and then it was absolutely necessary for some sort of communication to be made. They had to let the apostles know that they were ready. As no man is authorized to baptize in the name of Jesus Christ until a confession of faith is made that Jesus is the Son of God, we believe the apostles had the assurance.

The condition of membership of his church is obeying the commands. The commands obeyed declare Jesus to be the Son of God. The commands are so given and so arranged that each one, step by step, declares him to be the Son of God. When that declaration is fully made on the part of the individual, he becomes a part of the church built upon the rock: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Remove the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, and you make void the commands that declare him to be such and have no rock upon which to build. Let man refuse to believe, repent, confess, and be baptized, and there will be no church built. Men and women are the material of which the church is built,

and the commands are the power of God that shapes the material that makes up the holy temple of God. The plan of salvation obeyed declares him to be the Son of God, and is building his church "upon this rock."

Evidence is the first cause.

Belief is accepting evidence as true.

Repentance is a decision to do what is commanded for salvation.

Confession is making known the decision.

Baptism is a solemn declaration in act that Jesus is the Son of God and was raised from the dead.

There is no oath formulated by man to bind any one to a discharge of duty that is as binding, as forcible, and solemn as the man who stands before a congregation and makes the good confession.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT REPROVES.

Jesus told the apostles that he would send another Comforter, the Holy Spirit. He told them what the Comforter would do for them and for the world; that the world could not receive it, but that the Spirit would reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and the first experience of the world after the Spirit came was that of reproof or conviction.

“Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” (John 16: 9-11.) The promise of the Spirit and his coming according to promise is, according to our judgment, the strongest proof that Jesus went higher than the clouds and reached his home with the Father.

At Pentecost, the time the Spirit came, Peter told them what Jesus had done—the wonders and signs that God did by him while on earth, and that by wicked hands he was crucified. They were so reproved of sin they cried out: “What shall we do?” What Peter said

and what they saw and heard was evidence of supernatural power.

“Because they believe not on me.” The world would be reproved of sin when the Spirit came. When Jesus left this world, he went somewhere; and the coming of the Spirit is proof of his whereabouts. The Spirit came and delivered his message to the apostles, and they to the people; and it was so plain, so convincing that Jesus is the Son of God that they were reproved for sin of unbelief.

We believe the world still rests under this evidence for reproof of unbelief. The Spirit will never come again as on that day. The proofs of that day that Jesus is the Son of God have passed into history; the same proofs are found when the history is read. The proof abides, and repeats itself when read.

“Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.” Jesus said that he was going to the Father, and the Spirit came and said he is there. Is not this an all-sufficient proof that he is the Son of God? In this we have an expression of the Father testifying to the Spirit’s message of the whereabouts of Jesus. The Father’s acceptance is proof of the righteousness of Jesus, and this acceptance is made known by the Spirit. If Jesus had not been righteous, he could not have gone into his Father’s presence.

Jesus was accused of unrighteousness, but

the Father's acceptance reproves his accusers. We imagine just before Jesus reached the new Jerusalem that the Father said unto the tallest angel: "Cry aloud what David said, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates: and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.'" What stronger proof does the world need to be convinced of his righteousness? He went to the Father, as he said he would; he sent the Spirit, as he said he would; and we see him no more, as he said. The evidence of heaven and earth is that he is the Son of God.

Is it necessary that this be repeated in order to reprove the world of his righteousness? This evidence is just as true now as then. The proof once made is forever made. We may as reasonably expect Jesus to come back to earth, teach, and be condemned, crucified, and raised from the dead as to expect a repetition of the Spirit's coming in proof that Jesus is the Son of God and that he is righteous because he has gone to the Father. This is made for all ages and people, and the world to-day is under that conviction. There can be no higher evidence.

"Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Who is that prince? When, where, and how judged? "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (John 14: 30.)

When the devil tempted the Master, he offered the kingdoms of the world if he would fall down and worship him. The way the kingdoms treated Jesus it seems that Satan did really own them, for they were certainly loyal to him. "He hath nothing in me," said Jesus. There was no love nor sympathy, for he would not be his agent. He antagonized the works of the devil. So the devil began his work on the kingdoms of the world to take his life. It is true he had power to lay life down and to take it up. He could have called down legions of angels, but he was willing to die and become the world's Redeemer.

The world was made to believe that when he was crucified, an end had been made to his claims. This satisfaction on the part of the devil and his angels was interfered with by his resurrection. So they hired men to say that his disciples came by night and stole his body. But that did not end the matter. Forty days after his resurrection, in the presence of large numbers, he began to rise, talking as he went up, until a cloud shut off their view. No doubt the unbelievers' hope was renewed and many of his disciples discouraged. But when the Spirit came, the world had evidence, and that from heaven, that he is now King, and judgment was passed upon the prince of this world.

Jesus proved by overcoming all combined powers of the prince that he is conqueror of the world; that all worldly ambition and all

manner of sin will come into judgment; that Satan has not power to prevent it; that the prince of this world was tested, overcome, and found wanting. The world need no longer expect to follow its prince for a final victory; that his followers are now and forever forewarned of a limit and an end of his power. The prince of this world was judged by the victorious Christ. His victory was absolute and definite when he reached the Father. All efforts to suppress his claims had failed.

By showing the world the judgment of its prince would reprove it of judgment. The world is reproved of judgment for denying that Jesus is the Son of God, and following the prince of this world. When a clear-cut, decisive evidence is made of the final victory of Jesus, the world cannot but see it and be reproved of judgment.

The final evidence that Jesus is the Son of God is made known by the Spirit's coming according to promise. After the Spirit came, the evidence is enlarged by what the Spirit spoke to the apostles. This evidence is so conclusive that the world to-day is reproved of judgment. This evidence is abiding and will not be repeated. The facts are in the Book, and there as conclusive and final evidence. The Spirit reproves to-day as then through the same evidence. Let the world read to-day this record, and it will find itself reproved of judgment by the Spirit.

CHAPTER XIV.

GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

This is the most delightful chapter we have had. We are now new creatures, born into the kingdom of God, born into a royal family, Jesus being our elder brother, sunshine of glory making glad the heart. We can now truly say: "Our Father who art in heaven." It is a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

Jesus says the world cannot receive the Spirit. After the Spirit came, he reproved the world; but in order to receive him, man must obey the gospel. The Holy Spirit is a gift promised to those who obey the gospel. "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2: 38.) This is a gift without the asking, being conditioned on obedience. "We are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him." (Acts 5: 32.) Those who obey the gospel receive this gift, and they only.

"He that believeth on me, as the scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him shall receive:

for the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" (John 7: 38, 39.) Note the words, "he that believeth on me," in verse 38. We are not to understand that this is in conflict with Peter's answer about obedience. (Acts 2: 38.) This saying of Jesus occurred before the day of Pentecost. Link the promise of Jesus and Peter, and we have this conclusion: Jesus includes in belief what the writer of Acts does in 2: 44. Those people believed in Jesus and obeyed. A believer believes his commands and believes that he must obey them. So Peter by inspiration made promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who obey, and this is proof that Jesus meant the same.

We do not understand that the gift of the Holy Spirit means a baptism of the Spirit nor birth of the Spirit, but that there is an influence brought to bear that produces joy and gladness in the soul. The Spirit aids in producing this unspeakable joy.

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8: 15, 16.) The witness is not *to* our spirit, but *with*. We are children by *adoption*, and receive "the Spirit of adoption."

The Lord through the Spirit gave the com-

mands to be obeyed, asserting forgiveness when obeyed. When we obey, we have the testimony of the two spirits, one saying what to do and the other saying it is done. The Spirit of God bears testimony with our spirit that we are the children of God. The Lord wants his children of adoption to know and feel his approval and to cry: "Abba, Father."

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" This is said of people who had obeyed the gospel. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17.) Before the Spirit will make his abode in the temple there must be a cleansing, a remission of sins. The Spirit testifies of a fellowship and companionship with God. It is the seal of promise.

"And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." (1 John 3: 24.) Dwelling "in him" and "he in him" is predicated on keeping his commands. Without such an obedience there is no such union.

Take a child of nature who has been living on the cold comforts of a sinful, selfish world, with no place to call "home," and some good man asks him to go to his home and come under his watch care and guidance and be obe-

dient to the government of his home, to become one of the family, and at last become an heir, is only a faint comparison to the adoption into the family of God.

A well-directed and provided home, with a sweet spirit thrown around the orphan, gives it an assurance and a confidence that fills its soul with joy and gratitude. So it is with an adopted child of God. The so-called "burdens" of life become streaks of joy.

Any man that has not been adopted into the family of God, although he may have his thousands of this world's goods, is poorer than the most forsaken orphan. Man clothed in garments of sin is poor, ragged, and destitute.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." (Rom. 8: 26.) We are encouraged and helped by hope of redemption of these bodies which are so full of the dregs of disobedience. The Holy Spirit takes up our case with the Father, "making intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." "For we know not what we shall pray for as we ought." The Spirit becomes intercessor for the saints of God.

The human family is so diseased, so corrupt, subject to so many disappointments that even the Holy Spirit is given for a bosom companion to the saints of God. Honest efforts, honest purposes, honest intercessions are so im-

perfect that the Holy Spirit maketh intercessions for such according to the will of God.

We are nowhere commanded to pray to the Spirit, but to God in the name of Jesus Christ. We are not even commanded to ask the Spirit to intercede for us. We believe that true worship of God is so sacred, so pure, so holy that it is necessary even for the saints of God to have special intercession in their behalf by the Spirit.

CHAPTER XV.

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is a universal promise made to all who obey the gospel. But before the New Testament was made and written there were special gifts to the early church. The doctrine was new, no written book, and the apostles could not be with the newly organized churches all the time. So the Lord supplied this need by giving special gifts of the Spirit to enough to carry on the work.

There is a noticeable feature about the special gifts. It seems that they not only had to have a heart and life preparation, but they had to desire these gifts, and even to *covet earnestly* in order to have the best gifts. There were diversities of gifts, as enumerated in 1 Cor. 12: 8-10. These were made to perfect a body in which there should be no schism. Although some might have greater gifts and power, that such should not feel that the less honored members were not of the body, but that all are members of the one body, and, therefore, should have the same care one for the other.

Among the gifts mentioned and compared is that of speaking in unknown tongues and that of prophecy, which is greater; that five words spoken with understanding is better than ten thousand in an unknown tongue. Tongues are for a sign to them that believe not, but prophecy serveth them which believe.

While Paul encouraged a desire on their part for spiritual gifts, he gives strong intimation that such can be carried too far to the neglect of more important duties, and shows them a more excellent way. He introduces love, which is above all in practical Christianity; that it has a greater force and power than gifts; that prophecy, tongues, and knowledge shall fail, cease, and vanish away, but love never faileth.

When the early church came together and one should have a revelation, the one sitting by should be silent. "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." (1 Cor. 14: 31.) As they had no Book, each one present needed to learn of the prophets what the Lord desired them to know; so they were allowed to talk one at the time. Even if one should have a revelation, he would not forget it when his time came, for the spirits of the prophets are subjects to the prophets. By these special gifts the teachings of the apostles were renewed, and they also had divine assurances of God's presence and power

in confirming and executing the work of the church in the presence of unbelievers and enemies.

“When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” (Eph. 4: 8.) These gifts consisted of apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healings, helps, governments, and diversities of tongues. “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” The reasons for these gifts and the purposes to be accomplished are given in this passage. The apostles were greatly helped in their work of organizing, teaching, and upholding the church in its infancy—a time of great trials, strong opposition, and members few.

To-day we have no living apostles, no prophets, no miracle workers, none with gifts of healing, none with diversities of tongues as of old. What the apostles taught, what the prophets prophesied, the miracles performed by healing and otherwise to serve as evidence, we now have in the written Book, which has been sealed by the Father as sufficient. The day of revealing new scriptures is past. There is nothing to be added, nothing to be taken from.

The conditions are different to-day from

what they were before the New Testament was made and written. Under the present conditions, teachers, preachers, and evangelists are necessary, but are now qualified differently. The only scripture that you or any one else will ever know will come by study of the word of God, or some one will teach you that has studied it.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) In the light of this scripture, have we the promise of special spiritual gifts as of old? And does it support the idea of the need of such?

A man who has diligently studied the word of God, and whose very soul is afire with zeal and love for God, can think things and say things that he could not under different circumstances. A spiritual frame of mind has much to do with the speaker and what he says. Such conditions enable him to draw on his spiritual power and resources gleaned from God’s word. A deep piety, a close walk with God, daily living the teachings, gives man a spiritual knowledge and experience of the spiritual that makes his work effective and powerful. For want of such men, and not spiritual gifts direct as of old, is the cause suffering.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM.

All leading church organizations hold that a loyal, godly life must follow the act of membership. But how to become a member of Christ's body is where divisions arise, and arise largely from the different claims as to what the Holy Spirit does in conversion. Some claim that a man must be baptized with the Holy Spirit before he is a child of God, and that this comes in answer to prayer. Did Jesus or the apostles tell men to pray for this baptism? Jesus said to his twelve disciples: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." (John 14: 15, 16.) There is no Holy Spirit baptism now.

Had you ever thought how much a Holy Spirit baptism means? The apostles had not this baptism until after they were commissioned to go into all the world. By this baptism they were enabled to perform miracles as never before, and to preach the most wonderful gospel the world ever heard, and to preach it with heavenly power.

"And when he had called unto him his twelve

disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases." (Matt. 10: 1; Luke 9: 1, 2.) The twelve had that much power under the commission confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This baptism gave them a much greater power. It was a thorough qualification for the high duties of perfecting the establishment of the church. The conditions by which men are made church members were given unto the apostles to declare unto the world.

In John 14: 16-18, 15: 26, and 16: 7-13 we find that Jesus promised his twelve disciples another Comforter, "even the Spirit of truth;" that the Spirit would teach them all things, bring to their remembrance whatsoever Jesus had commanded them, guide them into all truth, and show them things to come. This is what the baptism of the Spirit did for the apostles. This promise was made before his death. Forty days after his resurrection he gave unto the apostles the great commission, but told them to "not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me." (Acts 1: 4.)

The apostles were to wait at Jerusalem "not many days." Ten days after his ascension "they were all with one accord in one place." All at once, "a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind" was heard. "Cloven tongues like as of fire" were seen. But there was no

fire, but “tongues like as of fire”—forked in appearance, cloven.

“But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1: 8.) “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2: 4.) In addition to spiritual knowledge, they were to have power; and such power was given unto them that they could prove the truthfulness of the gospel and its source by unquestionable evidence manifested in speech, signs, and wonders which they did. They were prepared for witnessing. The Holy Spirit, like electric currents from heaven, rested upon their heads.

In Matt. 3: 11 John says: “He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.” Read verse 7, about the Pharisees and Sadducees; read verse 10, about the ax. This was a mixed multitude—good and bad.

In Acts 1: 5 the apostles only are addressed. They were to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Nothing said about fire. The wheat will be garnered and the chaff burned. (Verse 12.) Holy Spirit baptism tells how to avoid the fire. Fire baptism is for the wicked and is certain to come.

Some claim that the “one hundred and twenty” mentioned in Acts 1: 15 received this

baptism. We say the apostles only. (1) We find in John and in Acts the promise to the twelve. (2) The antecedent of the pronoun "they" in Acts 2: 1 is "apostles" (Acts 1: 26). (3) They that received this baptism were speaking with other tongues and were Galileans. (Verse 4.) (4) Others said these men are drunk. What men? Not women. They that were speaking with other tongues. "But Peter standing up with the eleven said, These are not drunken as ye suppose." The eleven were speaking with other tongues and were accused of being drunk, and Peter stood up with the eleven and denied the charge.

Peter then proceeds to tell them what Joel had said, and that it has now come to pass, at least this part: "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." Also what David had said. He then tells them about the exaltation of Jesus, and that the Holy Spirit "hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

But why this baptism of the Spirit at this time and this great manifestation? To reveal the gospel to the apostles; to prove to the world that the apostles had a message direct from heaven; to prove that Jesus Christ did go higher than the clouds. One of the strongest proofs on record that Jesus is the Son of God was made by this baptism. The fulfillment of his promise was made in the presence of Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. God has a time, a place, and way

to make every revelation. Many thousands witnessed the fulfillment of this promise, so made to give strength of evidence to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

How did the Holy Spirit affect the hearers, directly or indirectly? The apostles only were baptized. The multitude saw and heard the manifestations and heard the apostles make the explanation; and when made, they cried out. This baptism was not to make any one a child of God direct. There is not an example of such, nor even implied that such is the case. The apostles were baptized by the Holy Spirit so that they could tell the world what to do to be saved. Jesus through the Holy Spirit gave commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. (Acts 1: 2.) What was revealed to them has been written in a Book. Everything that pertains to salvation, every duty, is in this Book by inspiration of the Spirit.

Did not Joel say that God would pour out of his Spirit upon all flesh? Did not Peter refer to this as being fulfilled that day? This baptism and its effect is for all flesh, even for the unborn. It is just as fresh and powerful to-day as then. We have the written word and they the spoken, and they are the same. Why written? To preserve revelation and to facilitate access. When we wish to learn about this baptism, we turn to the record and find the same as was made known to the apostles.

John, in the book of Revelation, said: "He

that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." John put this in a book, as directed by the Spirit. All who read it hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. This is the way we get what the Spirit says in the New Testament through its writers. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." How did we learn that the Spirit says "come?" By reading what the Spirit has said unto John.

Those who believe that a Spirit baptism will come in answer to prayer, why not send your missionaries to the field without the written word, and ask God to baptize them with the Holy Spirit? Why did not the Lord, instead of sending the apostles to the world to deliver the message, baptize all, as he did the apostles on the day of Pentecost? The inspired written word is the ordained plan of God. Human efforts and agency have their place and mission in spreading the gospel.

Where is the man to-day well versed in the Scriptures that has not learned them by human efforts and human instrumentality? The teaching of the Lord is to begin with the young. To bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—this is a work assigned to man and not to the Spirit. Paul told Timothy to study and show himself approved, rightly dividing the word of truth. Why not ask the Lord to baptize him with the Spirit?

CHAPTER XVII.

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM—CONTINUED.

We have heard men state in their pulpits that they make no effort to prepare their sermons; that even the subject and what they say is by direct revelation of the Spirit; on the next day hear a man of a different faith and order make the same claim, and their teachings are as far apart as the two poles. Does the "Spirit of truth" teach contradictions? There is a wrong somewhere. For a man to know the teachings of the Spirit, he must study the word of God.

"Well," says one, "does not the Spirit reveal to us as he did to the apostles?" If so, why the written Book? It is written that we may know the will of God. By study we grow in knowledge, and by practice of its teachings grow in grace, and we are so commanded. The written Book is the revelation of God through the Spirit. The Spirit now guides through the revealed word of God. Jesus told his disciples when they were brought before rulers that they need not take any thought about what they should say, but that the Holy

Spirit would tell them what to say. But that does not apply to men now. What the apostles taught by revelation of the Spirit is as far as the knowledge of man can go.

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” Are these things still hidden? No. “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (1 Cor. 2: 9, 10.) How did we learn about the things that God has in store for them that love him? By reading the Scriptures. It is by the Spirit of God that we know the things of God, which things are now in the Book.

It is true that we are constantly learning new truths and there are many more to learn, but they are in the Book, and men find these by study of the word of God. One truth learned helps to learn another. No man will dare claim that the Spirit is now revealing something not already revealed in the Book.

We admit that the New Testament does not go into detail of all the things that come up in life, but it does go into detail of general principles that cover every known act and duty of man. There is an underlying principle in the gospel that includes in its fundamental principles and teachings all the details of a daily life. You cannot mention one but what

is covered by principles in the law of God. Every subdivision of detailed duties has its fountain head in details of fundamentals.

You may claim that a truth given in the gospel is not revealed until understood. We admit that a full detailed revelation is not made of heaven and its glories, because man's mind is not capable of comprehending such wonders. "And it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." There is a part that he did not know and a part that he did. The change of man into a spiritual, glorified being is too big for man's understanding. Yet the fact that such a change will be made is revealed by the Spirit. When it comes to the duty of man, a detailed revelation has been given.

Cannot a sinner read Acts, second chapter, and learn what Peter commanded after he was baptized with the Holy Spirit, just as well as those who heard him orally? Cannot a Christian learn what is required of him in the New Testament? Are not the commands as simple in the Book as they were when spoken by the apostles? The Spirit is speaking to us to-day as he did to them. The words written express the same things and are as spiritual and powerful as when spoken to the apostles. What was revealed to each, and in all parts of the world, we have in book form.

If the Spirit reveals afresh unto men to-day what he did before the Book was written, will some one explain why the written Book? Suppose the Spirit revealed to-day as he did to the apostles, would it not be the same as we have in the written Book? Why do men go to the record to find out the teachings of God on any subject? Because it contains all information that God in his wisdom deemed necessary for man. We have a full and complete revelation made by the baptism of the Spirit.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM— CONCLUDED.

The New Testament makes mention of two Holy Spirit baptisms—at Pentecost, when the gospel door was opened unto the Jews; at the household of Cornelius, when the gospel door was opened unto the Gentiles.

Peter said to Cornelius: “Ye yourselves know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation.” But the Lord had showed Peter by letting down a sheet “that God is no respecter of persons.” It seems that he had not learned this by virtue of inspiration, but that the Lord employed a different method, one more convincing to him and others. National prejudice had to be broken up, and the Lord worked upon both sides by a course of events which, when completed, was convincing to both Jew and Gentile.

After Peter had preached a part of his sermon to these Gentiles, “the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word.” This was an astonishment, “because that on the Gentiles

also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit." Peter, in Acts 11: 16, calls this "pouring out" a baptism. This one and the promise made in Acts 1: 5, fulfilled at Pentecost, are the only ones so designated in the word of God. The Holy Spirit came direct in both cases without human agency. In this respect the two are different from any other visitations of the Spirit.

These Gentiles could also speak with tongues. God has a purpose, a design, in all his works. By this baptism of the Spirit on this occasion the apostles were relieved of all doubt as to the gospel being for the Gentiles; that remission of sin is for them, and that they were to accept the Gentiles in gospel obedience as they would the Jew. Then the question was asked: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" It seems that even the privilege of using the waters for baptismal purposes would have been forbidden without this assurance. Under such conditions, Peter wanted to know if any could object and upon what ground.

This baptism of the Spirit was given for the purpose of revealing truth, and by evidence of supernal power prove that God was present approving and confirming gospel privileges unto Jew and Gentile alike. By the vision of the sheet and this baptism of the Spirit the

apostles and Gentiles were brought together in understanding the purpose of God with reference to the Gentiles.

At Pentecost the *apostles* were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and the people witnessed the result; at the household of Cornelius *the people* and Peter and six brethren witnessed the result. Spirit baptism is a revelation of God accompanied with supernatural power and evidence.

We do not know the extent of the revelation made to the Gentiles, but we are certain that it did not equal that of the apostles, for they were specially prepared with a full message of all things past, present, and things to come. These Gentiles did two things as a result of this baptism—they spoke with tongues and magnified God. They were given something to speak, and, no doubt, being assured that they were included in the gospel plan of salvation caused them to magnify God. But what they must do to be saved must be told by Peter. The angel had told Cornelius that Peter “shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” We believe he did this according to the great commission, and closes with the last command—water baptism. He did not tell them that he thought it best. “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” Both Jew and Gentile have the same commands to obey and the same promises to enjoy.

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentile, whether we be bond or free.” This passage is thought by some to teach that all true members of the church, members of the one body, have been thus baptized. But the Book does not teach that a man must be so baptized to enter the kingdom of God, but that he must be born of the Spirit.

By the direction of the “one Spirit,” Peter commanded water baptism at Pentecost and at the household of Cornelius. They obeyed; therefore they were baptized into the “one body,” both “Jew and Gentile.” They were added to the saved after baptism. If they had refused to obey after Peter commanded them by the direction of the “one Spirit,” would they have been of the “one body?” It is by baptism that Jew and Gentile are made *one* in *body*. The same Spirit that commanded Jew commanded Gentile. From that day now and forever is that true.

I have been associated with men of unquestionable piety, true in heart and life; but they gave no evidence that they had the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They could not do what such did do and would be able to do now. If you claim this baptism for all who are of the “one body,” you must admit one of two things—that they can speak with tongues or that they are not of the *one body*.

In the second and tenth chapters of Acts we find the word "pour." Some think it a New Testament expression making pouring equivalent to baptism. The words *come*, *send*, and *pour out* are New Testament expressions relative to the Spirit; but all have reference to an approach of the Spirit upon the apostles.

We are not to understand that the Spirit himself was poured out as water from a broken vessel, but that spiritual power and knowledge were imparted of the Lord to them through the Spirit. He told things new and old and things to come. It was spiritual knowledge and power imparted to mind and body that produced the effect—not his coming, but what he did after the coming.

The Spirit was not poured out literally, but the things of the Spirit were imparted in profusion until it is stated they (apostles) were "filled" with the Holy Spirit. They were under the control, guidance, and influence of the Spirit—completely submerged by divine revelation of God's eternal truths.

"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you." Notice the word "after." The sending of the Spirit upon them, the coming of the Spirit upon them, and the pouring out of the Spirit upon them is not the baptism; for the apostles did not receive knowledge and power until after this was done. These are causes to an effect. The effect pro-

duced in and upon them is the baptism. When they had received the impartings of the Spirit, they were in this way and at that time baptized.

This baptism is upon all flesh for all time—given to the apostles that they might deliver the message to the world. The world is now bound by this message of the Spirit. All men will be judged by what we now have written in the Book. Instead of praying to God to send a baptism of the Holy Spirit, we should study the words of life in the Book and thank God for a full and complete revelation of his will.

CHAPTER XIX.

PREDESTINATION.

This is a Bible doctrine, but honest people are divided as to its meaning. "Foreordination" means the same thing as "predestination." Some claim that God has from the beginning determined whatsoever comes to pass.

What is known as "Calvinism" and "Arminianism" are very much opposed to each other in teaching. It is a certain fact that both as taught cannot be true. They are too far apart. But we believe there is a union ground established in the teaching of God's word. The Lord did not make preparation for different kinds of churches, for there is but one. The theories of men will not stand the fires of judgment.

We believe that all the Calvinistic ideas (and truly there be some) grow out of the scriptures that teach the aggressive move of God upon the world. But what God has done could not be expressed otherwise. He is the beginning, the originator, the maker of man, and the giver of law for man's guidance, protection, and comfort. God made the initial

step, for man could not. In his law there is a directive move that man might be developed. Commands of the Lord were given that man's powers given him in creation might be unfolded. When any nation forgets God, rejects his law, what promise has such a nation? This brings up the thought of responsibility.

Man in his order of creation is capable of making attainments beyond that of the beast of the field. To meet this creative demand a law was given. In this law God sets forth what is right and what is wrong. He tells man what to do and what not to do, and promises blessings to the obedient and punishment to the disobedient. This is universal in application to man.

There have been different administrations, but all for the good of man. There were commands at one age of the world binding, but new and different commands at another age. The Lord was dealing with an infant world. The purposes of God are wrought out through law. Law is the means to an end.

The Lord has decreed that the man who obeys shall be blessed, and the man who disobeys shall be punished. This fact no man will deny. The history of the past, the forecast of the future substantiates this claim. Man's destiny is by divine appointment through law. The man who will not obey God's commands is predestinated to punishment, while the man

who obeys is predestinated to blessings. This is God's decree, and no man can change it—that is, that God will punish the disobedient and reward the obedient.

We believe that a man to whom God gives commands is responsible to God and should obey. Commands are given to be obeyed and not rejected. It is true that without law there would be no disobedience; but without law man would be as the beast of the field. Existing evil is a positive proof of man's disobedience and his free moral agency. By man came sin.

The existence of the devil is proof of man's free moral agency. God has not deprived man of his liberty nor freedom by commanding him what to do and what not to do. Man is an exalted creature in this respect. It is an evidence of the reasoning power of mind in man, recognized by the Lord. This thought should stimulate man to nobility of action.

By making man a responsible creature, and at the same time allowing him to exercise his free moral agency, does not make God the author of sin. Man abuses his own power of reason when he disobeys. Without free moral agency, God would be a respecter of persons, unless he condemned all or saved all.

On account of man's access to right and wrong, he is tempted to do wrong; but there is no sin unless he yields. All virtues have

kindred vices. Unless there be such a thing as disobedience and freedom thereto, we would not know obedience. Unless there be white, there could not exist black. Obedience is rendered with existing opposing forces. That makes it obedience.

God foreknew and foretold the coming of Jesus. "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth: and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deut. 18: 18, 19.) "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3: 23.)

It was foreordained of God that Jesus should come, and he should speak the words which the Father gave him; also that whosoever would not hearken should be punished. But who should obey and who should disobey is not predestinated. The words "whosoever" and "every soul" will not justify such a claim. Also notice that this applies to the time of the Savior. This is the kind of predestination in the Bible.

Man can obey and he can disobey. Obedience and disobedience are the issues growing out of divine law. Man was not made for law,

but law for man. The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Man was not made to lie, but the law forbidding was made for man. Man was not made to steal, but commanded to provide things honest.

God has predestinated man by placing him under a predestinated law. If he obeys, he will be rewarded; if he disobeys, he shall be punished. No man is forced to fill a drunkard's grave nor a thief's dungeon nor a murderer's gallows.

"If every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" If the people of past ages who disobeyed received their just punishment, how may we expect it under the gospel? Did God cause these people to do wrong that he might punish them? Was it not "a just recompense of reward?" How could a punishment be just if their disobedience was predestinated?

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Eph. 1:4.) Before the foundation of the world, in the beginning of the purposes of God for man's spiritual welfare, God decreed that certain things should be done for man in the person of Jesus Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ was predestinated to the children of men, and man is, therefore, predestinated to its opportunity.

God loved the world, and, according to the good pleasure of his will, he gave Jesus Christ in accomplishment of his love and purpose.

To what does Paul say they were predestinated? "Unto the adoption of children." God predestinated that man would have the opportunity of adoption through Jesus Christ. Paul does not say they were adopted children before the foundation of the world. He does not say their adoption was predestinated. He does not say they were predestinated children to be adopted. We become children of God by obeying the law of adoption.

Did the Ephesians do anything to be saved? "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." (Eph. 1: 13.) Whom did they trust? Jesus Christ. When? After they heard the word of truth. What is this word of truth? The gospel of salvation. What does it mean to trust Jesus? A submission to his authority; a willingness to obey and to follow him, trusting their future destiny in the merits of his cause.

In Acts 18: 24-28; 19: 1-5 we find that Apollos preached unto them—that is, the Ephesians—and that they were baptized after the manner and purpose of John's baptism. John's baptism was valid and good until Peter on the day of Pentecost announced baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.

Apollos was "an eloquent man, and mighty

in the scriptures," but "knowing only the baptism of John." Aquila and Priscilla knew that John's baptism was then out of date, "and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." Paul comes along and tells them that they should be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, just as Peter commanded at Pentecost. This is an example of a second baptism in order to be right.

CHAPTER XX.

PREDESTINATION—CONCLUDED.

Sodom did not have the fifty righteous. Was it a just punishment to punish these people for doing what they did, if their evil deeds were predestinated by their Creator before the formation of the world, before they were born? Is not the punishment proof of their wickedness and their responsibility?

Jesus taught his disciples that those who would not receive them nor hear their words, "it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Matt. 10: 15.) Does Jesus here teach that a certain number were predestinated to obey and the rest to disobey? Why send out men to preach to a people who were predestinated to disobey it? Jesus locates the responsibility upon the people.

Nineveh was a wicked city, and Jonah was told to cry: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." That was God's decree. The people changed, and saved the destruction. Why did God hold these people responsible for their disobedience, if they were predestinated to do evil?

Did the Lord make Cain kill his brother, Abel? No. Cain grew angry because the Lord had respect unto Abel, and that was because of his offering. Did not the Lord tell Cain that if he would do the same, he would be accepted; and if he did not, "sin lieth at the door?" Not only that, "but unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." All this possible for Cain, for God so expressed it. One act of disobedience is a stepping-stone to others. God punished Cain because it was in his power to obey, and he would not.

Noah, no doubt, made an honest effort to get the people to obey the Lord. But every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was evil continually. Did God cause these people to sin? Did he destroy them for doing evils they were made to do? "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" explains the Lord's attitude and locates the evil and responsibility. These people were given one hundred and twenty years of grace in which to change.

"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." (Rom. 9: 17.) The Lord made just demands through Moses for the children of Israel. Pharaoh, by his conquest, had made slaves of them. They had become a source of revenue to Pharaoh and his government. He

was so selfish and hard-hearted that he delighted in putting extra work upon them to depress them. Their release for the purpose of worshiping God was refused. If man refuses to be ruled in obedience, he will be ruled in punishment, for God rules the world. Pharaoh's stubborn and unyielding disposition is shown in his pursuit to the sea. The demands of the Lord were righteous, but contrary to his wicked inclinations.

The Lord raises up wicked men by allowing them to live. The Lord endures with much long-suffering the acts of wicked men that he may show forth his mercy on vessels of honor. But when wicked men fill their cups of iniquity, God destroys. Pharaoh was a vessel fitted for destruction on account of his wickedness. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." The Lord does not harden the man who obeys. It is the man whose wickedness he has endured with much long-suffering. Is the wickedness endured by the Lord with much long-suffering predestinated?

Pharaoh was permitted to live and rule until he had reached the heights of wickedness worthy of death without mercy. He had so defied the commands of God that he was not worthy of mercy. God used miraculous means to convince him, and strong enough to convince all that there is but one true and living God.

The name of God was declared throughout all the earth. The combined world cannot overthrow the commands of God. The world is warned in this lesson against such folly.

Wickedness is not predestinated, neither is man predestinated to wickedness; if so, at the judgment day God will judge his own predestination. The dealings of God with sinful men are not written to prove a predestinated wickedness, but to show that God does punish the disobedient and thereby warn the world. We have no account of God's being displeased with a man that obeys him.

Judas betrayed the Master of his own free will and accord. "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born." Do you believe the Lord would make a man and make that man betray the Master, and then state: "It had been good for that man if he had not been born?" "For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity." "The field of blood." He made his own plans and agreements. When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned, he brought the money and said: "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." He does not say that he could not help it, but he does say, "I have sinned." This locates his responsibility and sin.

But was it not prophesied that the Master was to be betrayed, and that the scriptures had to be fulfilled? True, but that does not relieve Judas of the sin. Was not Judas forewarned of this by prophecy? If he had no knowledge of this, did he not know that it was wrong to betray the innocent? He said: "I have sinned." If you were to agree and accept money in payment to betray even an innocent friend of yours to a mob, would you not, like Judas, say: "I have sinned?"

The Lord, by his wisdom and power, can convert the wickedness of men into blessings for others and bring to pass things foretold, yet at the same time allow all men free moral agency. For an event to be foretold by the Lord does not make the Lord responsible for the act committed. The death of the Master was foretold, yet it was by wicked hands. Because the Father could see these events of the future does not clear the work done by wicked hands. They did the deed of their own free will and not by compulsion.

What about Esau and Jacob? "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unright-

eousness with God? God forbid." (Rom. 9: 11-14.) His foretelling did not take away their personal responsibility, nor did the Lord make a change in their formation affecting their future acts, but simply made choice of their future. God had promised to bless Abraham, his seed, and all nations. God was making a selection of the most worthy through whom the Savior should be born. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Ishmael was not of the right lineage.

If we will notice some of the things that developed in the life of Esau, we can easily see why God refused him to come into the line of ancestry of the Savior. Esau married contrary to the advice of his parents, and caused them grief. He married idolatrous women. Would it have been wise for God to allow these heathen and idolatrous mothers to raise up boys to make up the line of ancestry of the Savior? It was God's purpose to fulfill the promise made Abraham. That promise had to come from these two boys. How could this purpose be fulfilled in Esau, when his boys would be among the unworthy nations destroyed? Therefore he chose Jacob the most worthy, that his purpose might stand—not of works, for neither had done any good or evil. Therefore it is according to election, and without unrighteousness with God.

Esau was a "fornicator, or profane person."

(Heb. 12: 16.) Did the Lord make him commit this evil and then have Paul to denounce him and to warn others of his ungodly acts? If the Lord predestinated that he should do this evil, would not that be unrighteous on the part of God? But the act of choosing is what the Lord did, and there is no unrighteousness in it with God. The boys had committed no act.

The statement about the love of God for Jacob and hatred for Esau was written long after the boys were dead and their deeds finished. Gen. 25: 23 shows two nations, and that the descendants of Esau and the descendants of Jacob are special thoughts of the prophet when he said: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." It cannot be true that God predestinated Esau to do evil, and then hate him for doing the evil. God would be hating his own predestination.

Predestination refers to the time when God was purposing the making of man and the high and noble privileges that he purposed to offer man through Jesus Christ. The gospel is the predestinated plan of God for man. The opportunity of adoption, and for whom purposed, is to be determined by the extent of the preparation made by the Father. "God so loved the world" that Jesus was crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste death for every man. "Every

man" means "whosoever." But who should obey and who should not obey is not predestinated.

The blessings of Jesus Christ are predestinated through obedience to the gospel. The man that does not obey is as certain to be punished as the man who obeys is to be blessed. These are fixed certainties of God. When man obeys God, he fulfills the righteous purpose of God; when he disobeys, he refutes the grand God-given privileges that God in his wisdom and love provided and proclaimed for man's present good and eternal glory. Predestination, rightly considered, is calculated to impress the solemn duties imposed upon man by his Creator, and to strengthen his faith in the eternal powers and rewards of God.

CHAPTER XXI.

GOD NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.

It is difficult for man to determine the purposes of God under all circumstances, and for this very reason some have concluded that God is a respecter of persons. But God's thoughts and ways are higher than man's; therefore he cannot understand when nor how justice will be given to all men under all conditions. "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

It may appear that some have had more trials than others on account of their duties as leaders and otherwise, but the Lord will reward all men according to their requirements and service. The Old and New Testaments both teach that God is no respecter of persons.

It is true that the children of Israel were a chosen, peculiar people, and chosen for a peculiar, specific purpose on the part of God; but that does not mean God did or proposes an injustice to all others. His plan was to bless the world. The Judge of all the world will do right. God was teaching the world that there is but one true and living God. The history

of the chosen Jew, the promises and fulfillments, stands to-day as a monument of evidences.

“He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, unto him it is a sin.” Who is responsible for this sin? The man that knows what is right and will not do it. God’s saving power through Jesus Christ is through obedience. No man has the promise of a home in heaven that does not obey.

When the plan of salvation was perfected and declared, it was delivered for every creature. Why prepare the gospel for every creature and command it to be preached to the world if every man has not the power to accept and obey? Do you think that God would put this duty upon man if God had from the beginning fixed the destiny of all? What reason can you give for preaching the gospel to men forever condemned?

Why did Jesus tell his disciples to let their light so shine that other might be constrained, if the destiny of all men was fixed before man was born? Why did the Lord forbid man to do certain things, if that man was so made and his work so decreed that he had to do the forbidden thing? Are not the forbids of God proof of man’s responsibility, and not of man’s predestinated good and evil?

“But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is

no respect of persons." (Col. 3: 25.) If a man is predestinated to do wrong, does he sin if he commits the wrong predestinated? When a man is punished as a criminal by our courts, if that man was predestinated to commit the crime, do not the courts by their action condemn God's predestination?

We have known jurors who claimed that God predestinated all things that come to pass, but their verdict makes the criminal responsible for his crime, which is correct, but not according to their view of predestination. The Book teaches that man shall not kill, man shall not steal, man shall not commit adultery. If man was predestinated to commit such crimes, why does God forbid the coming to pass his own predestination?

"For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6: 7.) When a man sows evil deeds, he may expect to reap the penalties annexed, for God is no respecter of persons. "But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Obedience is sowing to the Spirit. Notice, man is to do the sowing. God does not rain down righteousness like brimstone from heaven. "A man" and "he" means "whosoever."

"Be not deceived; for God is not mocked." If the destiny of all men is fixed, who will be benefited or harmed by being deceived or not being deceived? The warning within itself is

proof that God is no respecter of persons, and that all are put on notice that man's reward will be according to the sowing. God did not sow a harvest of wickedness and death before man was born for him to reap. There is no excuse for man's being deceived. He would not sow wheat and expect to reap barley. Sowing and reaping is as universal as man and the acts of man.

"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." (1 Pet. 1: 17.) Man should be so consecrated to God and so obedient to his commands that he would honestly fear that some command might pass without his obedience, knowing that his reward will be according to his work. Every man will meet his work at judgment, and God, without respect of persons, will give to every man justice, which is according to the man's work. Otherwise God would be a respecter of persons.

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Whatever Peter may have thought about the gospel being for the Jew only, the vision of the sheet changed him to God's attitude on this subject. In other words, God announced to him and to the world that he is not

a respecter of persons. "But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God." (Rom. 2: 10, 11.)

"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 1: 7, 8.) Will God take vengeance on a man that obeys not the gospel, if that man was predestinated to disobedience? Vengeance will be taken because the man could obey, but would not. Vengeance is God's just punishment to the disobedient. When there is obedience, there is no vengeance.

The highest obligation, the highest known duty of men and of angels, is to obey the commands of God. The lowest attainments for time and eternity are made in disobedience. The life shaped and molded by divine power in obedience is the life that God will adorn with eternal glory.

Judgment day was not before the foundation of the world. When the *mighty angel* takes a little book in hand and sets his right foot upon the sea and his left on the earth and declares time shall be no longer, then all nations will be gathered and rewarded according to the work of each man. God is no respecter of persons.

CHAPTER XXII.

CALLED OF GOD.

Before the foundation of the world God purposed or predestinated man to a glorious opportunity. This came through the gift of his Son, and is revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Man was not called to this opportunity in its fullness until the purposed opportunity was perfected.

Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king who made a marriage feast for his son. Many were bidden, and afterwards servants were sent forth to call them. Other servants were sent out, but were cruelly treated. Still others were sent forth into the highways. Among the number who went in to the feast was a man who had not on the wedding garment. Then Jesus said: "For many are called, but few chosen." The chosen ones at this feast were the ones who accepted the invitation and put on the wedding garment. The number called were many compared to the chosen.

You might prepare a feast at your home for a number of your friends and the friends not

know about the preparation; but when you send out your messengers to deliver the invitation and in this invitation you make strong appeals for their presence, would they not be called? Suppose they begin to render their excuses—"I have bought a piece of ground," "I have bought a yoke of oxen," "I have married me a wife"—quite a number render excuses; would they not be called, but not chosen? A man may be called and then lost—called and not chosen. In order to be chosen there must be a response to the call and a compliance to the requirements.

When the apostles and others went forth with the gospel, the people who heard it were called. The Lord calls people through the gospel. Without the gospel either spoken or written, man knows nothing about salvation, of Jesus Christ.

Preaching the gospel is God's way and means of calling men. It is the expressed medium between man and God. Whenever man hears the gospel, he hears the calling of God, and is, therefore, called of God. But, like those called to the marriage feast of the king's son, many refuse to obey the call. The man that goes to the dark corners of the world and preaches the same gospel that Paul preached, while he, like Paul, may be compelled to stay one or more years in a city, those who are told of the wonderful preparation that God

has made and that God has invited them, they are then called of God. It is so arranged by divine appointment that man is to preach the gospel. This work is not even assigned to angels. Man is to deliver the call of God. There is no higher trust nor a more sacred duty than for a man to be a mouthpiece for God, delivering the call of salvation and glory.

God's call consists in telling man what the Lord has prepared for man through Jesus Christ, and what man must do to be saved. He is called to future glory through obedience. Heaven will not be populated with men who have not believed and repented. The Lord furnishes the robe of righteousness in his gospel, and man must put it on.

We take the position that man is not now called except through the gospel. It tells man what God has done for him and what he is commanded to do. A man's attention may be arrested by the wonderful workings of God even in nature, but the gospel is God speaking direct to man.

“Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thess. 2: 14.) How called? By the gospel—not by a mysterious, small voice from the skies. Men are called in the preparation of the gospel, but not in person until the gospel has been preached unto them.

“That ye would walk worthy of God, who

hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.” God does the calling through the gospel unto his kingdom and glory, but man must “walk worthy of God.” This is a walk of obedience.

“For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” We are called with a holy calling—“according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus.” Before the foundation of the world God purposed this very gospel and the preaching of the same to a lost world. People are in this way called to the grace given in Christ Jesus. This is a holy call, because it is of God; holy, because man is called unto a holy living; holy, because invited to a holy place.

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” Note, “calling” is before “election.” “Diligence” means to be constant in effort—not idle nor negligent. In order to make the call efficient and effective, diligence is required. You take it out of a man’s life, and he will be a failure in the Master’s vineyard.

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life whereunto thou art also called”—called of God through the gospel, for it tells about eternal life through a good fight of faith. It requires a good fight of faith to answer the call.

Paul said: “I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Je-

sus." There is no call so high as this, because in Christ Jesus God has given the world the highest and noblest privilege that heaven can bestow. Do you not feel the constraining influence of this call of God for a purer and nobler life? Can you estimate the value of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? "I press" was Paul's way of response.

"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2: 39.) Note the words "shall call." What is the promise made to the fathers, their children, and to the "afar off?" Remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit were promised upon conditions of obedience. Is the promise "to your children" and "afar off" made without obedience, like that commanded of the fathers? No; the same conditions for all. We want you to notice this uniform and universal law of pardon and promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit. If man receives remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit as promised by Peter without complying with Acts 2: 38, upon which he based the promise of remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, Peter made a mistake, for he certainly does give only one law of conditions for all.

The statement, "even as many as the Lord our God shall call," does not limit the promise to a few of the fathers, their children, and

“afar off,” but a statement summarizing the enumerated and including any and all that might apparently be left out in the enumerated statement. The promise is to all who will comply with the conditions. No man can comply with the conditions until called. He must first hear the gospel.

In Acts 1: 8 Jesus says “Jerusalem,” “Judea,” “Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” We understand from these two scriptures that God had made preparation for all, and that all were called in purpose, but that the gospel had a starting place, and that a course was mapped out by the Lord for the spread of the gospel; that the apostles went as directed, and that whenever they reached a new field, that was the appointed time for the call to be effective for them. They were personally called of God when they heard the gospel.

Finally the time came in this way for the Gentile, the “*afar off*,” and the apostles made many long voyages preaching the gospel “unto the uttermost part of the earth.” When they heard the gospel, they were called of God, for the call had been delivered. There are no bounds nor limits for gospel opportunity. Where the gospel is being preached the call of God unto holiness is being delivered. Many hear the call, but few heed it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ELECTION—CHOSEN OF GOD.

The Scriptures teach that predestination is before election in the order of God's plan and work; that by predestination and election of God no man is relieved of responsibility; that compulsory obedience and disobedience is not imposed upon any man. Adultery, fornication, murder, drunkenness, and such like, are not forbidden to merely prevent self and family debauchery and to keep one out of the chain gang or from the gallows, but man cannot do these things and inherit the kingdom of God.

If God predestinated a certain member to eternal happiness and the rest to condemnation, he virtually made choice in this act. God predestinated the gospel as we have it, the preaching of the same, and that the obedient should be blessed and the disobedient punished. God made choice, not who should obey, but of those who would obey, for it is by obedience that man comes up to the conditions purposed and decreed of the Father that makes man acceptable with God. "In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is ac-

cepted with him." Man's acceptance with God depends on his obedience. If God predestinated a certain number to do his will and elected them because they were predestinated to do his will, what is obedience and disobedience?

The Ephesians obeyed the gospel, thereby complying with the conditions which Jesus commanded to be preached to every creature. Every man that now obeys the gospel has the same assurance that he, too, was chosen of God in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, for God made obedience the condition of choice. Before the Ephesians obeyed the gospel they were dead in trespasses and sin. "Having no hope and without God in the world." (Eph. 2: 12.) "Chosen us in him" through obedience. No man is in Christ Jesus until he is a new creature. He is not a new creature while dead in trespasses and sin.

God purposed that all who will obey, and they only, would be accepted or chosen. "For the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3: 9.) The Lord "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17: 30.) If God unconditionally elected a certain number to do his will, how can it be expected of the rest to repent? Why command all men everywhere to repent if God so fixed it from the beginning that only a certain number could repent?

If the Lord chose certain men to do his will and saved them before the foundation of the world because they were chosen to do his will, and punished the rest because they were not chosen to do his will, means an unconditional election, and makes God a respecter of persons, which is not true. The burden of the New Testament is an appeal to all men to obey the gospel and be saved. No man can place his hand on a single person for whom Christ did not die. You may let your mind run all over the world, and you will not find a man to whom Jesus has not commanded that his gospel should be preached.

It is true that free salvation to all who will obey, and that God is no respecter of persons, is abundantly taught, but cannot be harmonized with *unconditional* election. But *conditional* election, free salvation to all who will obey, and that God is no respecter of persons, harmonizes perfectly.

The Thessalonians, when found by gospel preachers, were idol worshipers. After hearing the gospel, they believed it and turned to God. Yet it is stated of them that "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. 2: 13.) How chosen? "Through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." The Spirit was given to reveal the truth. Truth obeyed makes free men.

But they were not new creatures in Christ Jesus until after they turned from idols unto God.

Their being chosen of God does not refer to a creative preparation, but to a condition—a change wrought upon them by gospel obedience. God purposed from the beginning that man must be a new creature to be in Christ Jesus; and to become such, he must obey the gospel purposed of the Lord at the time choice was made. Whoever obeys the gospel, it matters not how many nor how few nor in what part or parts of the world, they are in Christ Jesus and were chosen in him before the foundation of the world.

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. 1: 2.) By the foreknowledge of God the plan of salvation was purposed, completed, and offered to all men. Through the Spirit the gospel was revealed. The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus represents its atoning effect. Obedience means gospel obedience.

Peter, referring to the same people, says: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth.” (Verse 22.) Nowhere in any of the Epistles are they spoken of as the *chosen* or *elect* until they had obeyed the gospel.

God decreed that the obedient should be ac-

cepted with him; and when he purposed the conditions of salvation through Jesus Christ, he made his election through these conditions. When any man obeys the gospel, he has reached the required standard upon which God based the election before the foundation of the world. Obedient characters, and not persons, were chosen; and whosoever obeys as did the brethren to whom the different Epistles are addressed, becomes one of the chosen in person. If ten million, or whatever the number may have been who heard the apostles preach, had obeyed the gospel, they would have done exactly what the apostles tried to get them to do and what God commanded them to do, and would have been addressed together with the rest as the "elect of God," because the purposed conditions of acceptance upon which God based the test of choice of all, without respect of persons, would have been complied with. Nowhere can you find where God requires less of any man, nor anything more of any man, than to be a faithful member of the church of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ELECTION—CONTINUED.

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (John 6: 37.) The Father gave the Son power by which he might prove his Sonship and the Fatherhood of God. Jesus manifested the Father in the flesh. He said of himself he could do nothing, meaning that the supernatural power in working miracles was by the power of the Father. God has given evidence through his Son, and through this evidence believers are given to the Son.

Jesus told the multitude that it is the work of God, or a work that God requires of them, that they believe on his Son; that it is the will of him that sent me that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life. It is the Father’s will that no one deny his Son; that if they denied the Son, they denied the Father who sent him; that if they had believed Moses, they would also believe him, for Moses wrote of him.

“No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” It is by the

power of the Father that men are drawn to the Son, and Jesus so taught. The power of the Father exercised through the Son is the power that draws men. "And they shall be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me." Jesus was directing their minds to the fact that he, as the Son of God, was revealing the love of the Father, and what the Father was doing and would do for them through the Son; that when the purposes of God were correctly understood, they would come to the Son. Man can be changed from a disbeliever to a believer, but he must listen to the Lord's teaching.

"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." He had fed five thousand with five loaves and two fishes. Did he not command every man and make the same promise to all? If a certain number were predestinated and chosen to do his will, why command all and make the same promise to all?

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John 10: 27, 28.) The shepherd and his sheep is a favorite figure of the Bible. This chapter tells of an inclosed place into which the shepherds would bring their sheep at night for

protection and rest. This inclosure had a door through which the different flocks could pass.

On the morning the door would be opened, and the different shepherds would begin to call. Each sheep knew the voice of its shepherd. Each sheep was named, and would not follow strangers. From this method of handling sheep Jesus draws many beautiful lessons in application to himself as shepherd and to his followers as sheep. Jesus taught by this lesson that in order to be his sheep they must be as submissive to him as shepherd as the natural sheep were to their shepherds.

Jesus said: "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." To whom is salvation promised? To *any man* who will enter. Is he saved before he ever enters? If he never enters, will he be saved? Jesus Christ is the doorway into the kingdom of God. Man passes through the door by obeying the conditions of the gospel. Salvation is through Jesus Christ. "By me if any man enter in," it matters not who he may be, if he goes through the door, the appointed way, becomes a sheep of the spiritual fold.

Jesus does not teach that a certain number were predestinated and chosen, and they only compose the number that could and would hear his voice and follow him, and thereby reject and debar from entering the door all the rest.

If that be true, to whom does he refer in the words: "If any man enter in, he shall be saved?" It cannot apply to the supposed pre-destinated and chosen, for a condition is expressed. But any man that does not hear his voice and follow him, as the natural sheep did their shepherds, that they are not his sheep, for his sheep would be as willing to follow him as the natural sheep their shepherds.

"Well," says one, "a sheep is a sheep, and a goat is a goat, and goats cannot be changed to sheep nor sheep to goats. Just here is where the teachings of the Master are confused." There is no mention of goats in the tenth chapter of John. The leading thought is obedience and submission to the great Shepherd of men.

In the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew we have the idea of separation of the good and bad—judgment day. The Savior compares this to a shepherd dividing his sheep from the goats. One is a separation of bad men and good men; the other, a separation of goats and sheep. After the separation, bad men are classed as goats and good men as sheep. The sheep are set on the right hand; the goats, on the left. The right hand is an emblem of honor and power. Those on the right hand are rewarded and told why thus rewarded; likewise those on the left hand. Obedience and disobedience, reward and punishment, is the story.

Did the Lord cause those on the left hand to

do evil, and then punish them because he made them to do evil? Did the Lord cause the five foolish virgins to act foolish, and then shut them out because they had acted foolish? No; they were foolish for not doing what they might have done. Did the Lord predestinate that the wicked and slothful servant should dig in the earth and hide the one talent, and because he was thus predestinated he could not be chosen? No; the way he acted is why he has the name. Some foolish virgins and slothful servants are still living.

Some have the idea that the sheep-man and the goat-man have been and always will be the same. It is true that natural sheep and goats keep their own nature. But the Master does not claim that man cannot be changed, but teaches the contrary. Man once dead in trespasses and sins brought to newness of life is a greater change than a natural goat becoming a sheep. Man debauched, covered with sin and guilt, who is unsafe for good society, a corrupter of good morals, and an enemy to the church, is certainly not at that time a sheep of the spiritual fold. But such can be and has been changed, and the change is even greater than a natural goat becoming a sheep. The acts of man are not unyielding as the nature of natural sheep and goats. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:

17.) Is this the elect world? No, for it was not saved at this time. "Might be saved" expresses a possibility for the world and not a part.

Men are also represented as being fruit trees, and are followed up by a judgment just as the sheep and goats. A good tree, bearing good fruit, represents a good man. Has man anything to do with the kind of tree and kind of fruit? Jesus said: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit." (Matt. 12: 33.) The fruit tells the kind of tree. It is better to do evil without the pretense of being good than to pretend to be good and bear evil fruit. A hypocrite has one extra sin to account for—that of hypocrisy—which is a grievous one. That is why Jesus teaches that it is better for a man to be honest in his acts. A hypocrite is worse than an infidel.

A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. It must be changed. We have seen old, rusty, grouchy, crab-apple men changed and become bearers of the peaceable fruits of righteousness. God furnishes the means for a change—the gospel; and if man will hear it and obey it, the tree and his fruit will be changed.

Naturally speaking, a fruit tree is not changed to a different kind, no more than a natural goat is changed to a sheep; but the

tree is used to represent man, and man can be and has been changed. A change that is made by man is by figure of speech spoken of as taking place in the tree. The change that takes place in man must also be represented as taking place in the tree and his fruit, else the figure of speech is not good. The change of man can be so great that it is represented by changing one kind of tree to that of another. Man can make of himself an idolatrous tree, bearing the fruits of idolatry, or he can make a good tree, bearing righteous fruits.

CHAPTER XXV.

ELECTION—CONCLUDED.

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom. 8: 29, 30.) The persons referred to in this passage were *foreknown* and had been *called*, *justified*, and *glorified* when Paul wrote—all in the past tense.

Who are the “foreknown” of whom Paul is writing? The children of Israel. (Rom. 11: 1, 2.) To what were they “predestinated?” “To be conformed to the image of his Son.” For what purpose? “That he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” When was this predestination fulfilled? When Jesus was raised from the dead. Compare the expression, “firstborn among many brethren,” to Matt. 27: 52, 53: “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and

went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” Notice how careful the writer is in stating “after the resurrection.” We now have the “firstborn,” and also the “many brethren.” Many bodies of the saints arose, no doubt, who had been dead for centuries. The “foreknown,” “his people,” who lived and died before the resurrection of Jesus, were predestinated to be conformed to his image and to rise from the dead at this time and be the “many brethren” of whom Christ was the “firstborn.” They were predestinated to a resurrection through Jesus Christ.

“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called.” According to the purpose of God, they were called to live under the law; by faith in the promise of the coming Savior, obey the law that foreshadowed his coming. The call dates back to Abraham when he was told to leave his country.

“Whom he called, them he also justified.” They could not be and were not justified by the law. The blood of animals could not take away sin. Only by the blood of Jesus could those who had been dead for centuries be justified. The justifying power of the blood of Jesus was not effective until he had been raised from the dead.

“Whom he justified, them he also glorified.” The living Jew after the resurrection of Jesus Christ was no longer under the law. The law

is past, and a new covenant founded upon better promises has been given. So far as Jew and Gentile, there is no difference as to gospel obedience.

We believe that the grand old men who lived in ages past, who died in faith, not having received the promises, but saw them afar off, embraced them, confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, were glorified when Jesus was raised from the dead; for this scriptures refers to past acts of God upon a past people.

The long-standing promises of God with reference to the Jews as a chosen people made to Abraham, that all nations should be blessed through his seed, had been fulfilled; that it marks the beginning of a new era, not only with the Jew, but the whole world. Paul, reasoning from the fulfilled promise and glory with reference to Israel, states that God had not even spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"—meaning that God will bring to pass his promises.

We will give a few more reasons why we believe that those people mentioned in Rom. 8: 29, 30 refer to the past dead. "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Paul is telling these people what they must experience for the sake of Christ that they may be glorified. It is, then,

a certain fact that they were not included in the number glorified in Rom. 8: 29, 30.

Paul, in speaking of his kinsmen in the flesh, was so anxious about them that he had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart. (Rom. 9: 1-4.) If they had been of the number *glorified*, would he have had any uneasiness concerning their future? Paul knew that all men must accept Christ if they are ever saved; that no man who denies the Son of God can be saved. And the Jews, as a nation, had denied the Christ, and Paul felt uneasy for them.

Paul makes another statement somewhat similar that expresses his desire for the disobedient Jew: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." (Rom. 10: 1.) Paul did not think they were already saved and among the number *glorified*. If a certain number had been predestinated and chosen to eternal life and had been glorified, either in purpose or in fact, Paul would have known it. He would not have lost any time in trying to persuade men against the decrees and fixed purposes of God. But this he knew: that for them to be glorified, they must accept, obey, and suffer for the sake of Christ.

Another statement of Paul helps us to a better understanding of whom he refers when speaking of the *foreknown*. "As he saith also

in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved." (Rom. 9: 25.) This reference is to the Gentile world, but they are not the "foreknown," "his people," referred to in Rom. 11: 1, 2, nor were they numbered with those *glorified* of Rom. 8: 29, 30. When did these Gentiles become his people? When they accepted Christ and obeyed his gospel. The Gentile has the same access to the gospel; the middle wall has been broken down. For Jew and Gentile to be called according to his purpose means to be called according to the gospel. (Rom. 16: 25, 26.)

Paul says: "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid." (Rom. 11: 1.) The Jews who lived at the time of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and since were not "cast away," because God had through Jesus Christ put an end to the law of Moses and set up a new dispensation, and they had refused to believe in Jesus Christ. But God still had an open door for them. "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again." (Rom. 11: 23.) But notice the condition: "If they abide not still in unbelief."

"And so all Israel shall be saved." (Rom. 11: 26.) We are not to understand that Paul means those who reject Christ shall be saved, for he has already stated: "If they abide not

still in unbelief." The natural branches were broken off because of unbelief. So all Israel who abide not in unbelief shall be saved. They are really the true Israel. All who die rejecting the Christ certainly have not been born again and will not enter the kingdom of God.

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." (Eph. 1:4.) Would a *chosen* Israelite who dies without believing in Christ be chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world? Man was chosen in Christ, and not out of him. But man is not in Christ until he is a new creature. He must be born of water and of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. The gospel obeyed is God's law and way of making new creatures. When a man puts on Christ in baptism, he is then in Christ, a new creature, chosen in him before the foundation of the world; not chosen at that time to comply with the conditions, but because he has now complied; not unconditionally saved and chosen to do his will, but for doing the conditions of his will to be saved. When God purposed the conditions of salvation through Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world, the conditions determined his choice, and that for "whosoever" would obey.

Just here we are reminded of a conversation with a colored man who said that whatever he did was predestinated of God. It seemed that

the old man really believed it. We said to him: "Did you ever tell a lie?" "Yes, sir," was the reply. "Well, did not God command you not to lie?" "He did." "Then, according to your theory, God commanded you not to lie, but had predestinated that you should. Who is responsible for the lie told?" The old man saw the point and answered correctly: "I am." This is true with all men and with all commands of God.

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If it is not every man's duty and privilege, will some one please tell us who is excused from such a life? What man can place one hand on the Bible and the other on his heart and turn his face heavenward and truthfully say that God has excused him from living such a life? Obedience and disobedience fixes the destiny of all men.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

CHAPTER XXVI.

“FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.”

This is a wholesome doctrine to many. We have many friends and relatives that believe this teaching. But we want to know the teaching of the Book on this great question, as no such question can be settled apart from the word of God. Truth is mighty and as lasting as eternity; it is as powerful as the throne of God.

We wish to ask three questions and, according to the teaching of God's word, answer them:

1. Is it possible for man to fall?
2. Is it possible for fallen man to be restored?
3. Is it possible for man to fall so low that he cannot be restored?

We think this a very important subject, because man is inspired to effort and steadfastness when he realizes that his relationship to God and his kingdom is maintained by a continued gospel obedience.

The Book is dotted from beginning to end with duties and warnings. The warnings

within themselves are proof of the possibility of a fall. Dangers are so common that the Book defines very closely and clearly the safe side of man. "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." Man is to cultivate a hatred for evil, and in his own life is the place to begin. It is possible for man to overcome evil with good by cleaving to the good, and it is possible for the possible good of man to be overcome of evil by not cleaving to the good. Man is to put on the whole armor of God—"fight the good fight of faith." Whoever fails to make just such a fight will be captured by the enemy.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." (2 Pet. 1: 10.) A man's calling and election are made sure by addition or growth. What makes sure the call and election prevents a fall. "Diligence" is a strong word, and means full-grown efforts to live up to the standard of required growth. It is by actual experience that man acquaints himself with the duties commanded of God. Truth obeyed gives knowledge of the truth and an experience of its power.

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." (1 Tim. 6: 9.) A man may

yield to the love of money until he will forget the true purposes of life and at last be drowned in *destruction* and perdition. Not only warned of a fall, but of a destruction—an utter destruction. Evils connected with money-making are so numerous that we have many warnings on the subject. A warning is a signal of danger. The wise man heeds the warnings; the foolish man runs over them into destruction.

Any man that loves money better than just principles is on dangerous ground. True weights, measures, and values are a delight to the Lord. How dwelleth the love of God in a man that seeks the advantage of his fellow-man through the man's ignorance or his oppressed needy circumstances? The man that pushes aside honesty and fair dealing, seeking the eagle above all things else, is a mammon worshiper.

It is possible for a man to be so bound up and wound up by the love of money that he cannot hear the cries of widows and orphans. The tendency to fraud and deception, to purchase and not pay, is so great we need to study more closely the result of such doings.

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of person ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” (2 Pet. 3: 11.) Why this warning? To stir up their *pure minds* by way of remembrance. To

be writing to men of pure minds to remind them of a closer walk is certainly a strong expression of a common need of man in order to make a safe landing.

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” (1 Cor. 10: 12.) Why take heed? “Lest he fall.” There is no man but needs this admonition. None ever becomes so good that he outgrows it. It matters not how securely and firmly grounded in the faith he may think himself to be, he reaches times and places in life that he needs to stop and consider the words: “Take heed.” By taking heed is where his help comes in that prevents a fall. When he takes heed, he will not move a step without a “thus saith the Lord.”

“Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.” (1 Tim. 1: 19.) When a man’s faith is torn up and wrecked as a vessel at sea, has he not fallen? He has failed to take heed and to watch. Can a shipwreck of faith befall a man who has never had faith? “Having condemnation, because they have cast off their first faith.” (1 Tim. 5: 12.) How cast off faith, if never in possession? Does not the writer say that at one time they had faith? “For some are already turned aside after Satan.” (Verse 15.) How turn aside, if never in the narrow way? “For we are

made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” (Heb. 3: 14.) Notice the condition.

“The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” (2 Pet. 2: 22.) Could you formulate language to express more clearly a *fall* from a previous condition? If not possible, why this proverb?

“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.” (2 Tim. 4: 10.) He was a companion of Paul, and even sent greeting to the brethren at Colosse. (Col. 4: 14.) We could give passage after passage in proof that a man may at one time love God and turn to the love of the world; but we think this sufficient to put it beyond controversy.

If God predestinated their fall, who will be profited by his warnings and admonitions? Were the words, “take heed lest ye fall,” intended for those that were predestinated to fall or those that were predestinated not to fall?

Second question: “Is it possible for fallen man to be restored?”

In Revelation, chapters two and three, we have messages to the different churches—local congregations. Their good and evil are pointed out. For their evil they are commanded to “repent.” They are told what to do to be restored. We suspect some did and some did not.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” (Gal. 6: 1.) This passage teaches that a brother may *fall* and may be *restored* by the spiritual. The thought of church discipline, and also how close it is to be enforced, is suggested by this passage.

The object of church discipline is to preserve the standard of required purity; to deal with the erring for the purpose of restoring. If the efforts of the spiritual fail, the church is to withdraw. The church is now suffering from want of pruning. The standard of purity has been lowered by allowing ungodly men of all classes to remain and claim their church identification. It is an injustice to the ungodly, and has a paralyzing effect upon the church and its mission. The church needs a “back-door” revival. Those overtaken in a fault must be dealt with in order to have a growing church. A church filled up with liars, whoremongers, drunkards, extortioners, and such like, has no spiritual power nor influence. It means death.

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” (James 5: 19, 20.) Suppose an erring brother was saved and elected before the foundation of the world, as

taught by some, how could his soul be saved from death, when he is already eternally saved? Suppose he is eternally lost, why teach a possibility of saving such?

This passage clearly teaches two possibilities—one of a brother erring, and one of converting the erring. By converting the erring, a soul is saved from death. This is not physical death, but a death of the soul. Does not this passage teach that if an erring brother is not changed or restored, he will lose his soul in death?

"If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." (Luke 17: 3.) How often? If necessary, "seventy times seven." (Matt. 18: 22.) In the first part of this chapter Jesus warned them about offending. He next tells them how to proceed with an offender. The point of the lesson that we wish to notice is when the offender refuses to hear the church. The church is not to recognize him as a brother, but to treat him as the church should treat a heathen and a publican; not to abandon the idea of restoring him. This passage teaches a possibility of restoring an offending brother before it is carried to the church for final disposition. If a brother proves himself unworthy of church membership and the church by divine instruction withdraws from such, could a man unworthy of church fellowship be worthy of companionship with the redeemed in glory?

CHAPTER XXVII.

“FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS” —CONCLUDED.

Third question: “Is it possible for man to fall so low that he cannot be restored?”

There is a division on this point. Some claim that the Lord gives no bogus titles, which is true. But if the life is a bogus one, his title will be the same. Man’s final reward will be according to the life.

It is claimed by some that if a man has been saved, he will never be lost; that if he has been born of the Spirit, even if he should fall away, he will finally be restored and saved; that if a man has once been saved, he has a clear title at all times to the glory world.

The Master said: “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.” We believe that both good and bad will have an eternal existence; that everlasting life is not merely an eternal existence, but an existence free of punishment and full of bliss and glory. Everlasting punishment and not sharing the glories of heaven is death. This life or this death begins with us

in this world. We live the life of life or the death of death.

The man that obeys the law of pardon is saved from his past sins and enters upon a new life—a babe in Christ. He is saved from a punishment that was at one time just. But his future life is to be on a higher plane. He must go the narrow way to keep right. Here is where so many fail. The real battles of life are now on. A good fight of faith must be made to be victorious. He must not, like the sow that was washed, again wallow in the mire of wickedness. Being saved from his past sins does not save him from his future mistakes. He is to remain faithful until death to receive the crown of life. It is after death that the righteous enter into everlasting life.

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” (Gal. 5: 4.) It is possible for man to depart from the doctrine of Christ. We are warned against antichrist, false teachers and prophets. If impossible for such to have an influence, why the warning? How could these people fall from grace if never in possession? “Ye are fallen from grace.” The Book says so.

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” (1 John 3: 9.) Some think that this passage

teaches the impossibility of a man born of God committing sin; but such a conclusion is not in harmony with the general teaching of the Book, nor even with John's teaching. The first two divisions of this chapter deal with this question.

In 1 John 2: 1, 2; 2: 14; 2: 28 we have the words "abide" and "continue." If not possible for these little children in Christ to fall, to be led away and deceived by the enemy, the warning is meaningless. When a man is born of God, he is not spiritually grown, nor will he grow unless the word of God abides in him. The seed of God that remain is the word of God. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible."

John does not teach that a man can be so steadfast that it is impossible for him to commit sin, but is showing how to fortify self against the attacks of the enemy by having the word of God abiding in them. A man cannot be true and sin willfully, and this is the point of his warning. Man cannot sin willfully and maintain a holy relationship to God. The moment that man sins he is in need of pardon, and unless he obeys the law of pardon required of a brother overtaken in a fault, which is repentance and prayer, he cannot inherit eternal life.

It is not the impossibility of committing sin expressed in the negative, "cannot sin," but the

impossibility of continuing in sin and remaining a true follower of Jesus Christ. Man cannot be true and untrue at the same time; man cannot be married and unmarried at the same time. This is the standard that John puts before the little children, and tells them that he is writing these things unto them “that ye sin not.”

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” (John 15: 2.) Jesus is the true vine; the Father, the husbandman; the branches, his disciples. If a man is a branch of the vine, is he not born of God? Could he be a branch and not be a child of God? Note the words, “every branch in me.” Each one, taken separately, “that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” Bearing fruit refers to deeds of righteousness. The branches must abide in the vine to bear fruit. Does not this scripture teach that a man may be saved, be a branch of the vine, and then fail to bear fruit and be cut off? After he is cut off, is he then a saved man? He was once a saved man, but now a lost man. The church may fail to withdraw from ungodly men, but the Father taketh away such. They are not counted with the saved. Our spiritual relationship to the Master is maintained through obedience and is severed by disobedience.

It is claimed by some that all persons for whom Christ died will be saved. Hear the

Book: "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died." How perish as being a brother unless once numbered with the saved? If once numbered with the saved and then perish, man may at one time be saved and then be lost. If such a brother was predestinated to perish, then Christ died for the predestinated lost. If not predestinated to perish, we can see some reason of the commanded duties toward this brother.

In this passage we see one of the reasons why the Master expects fruit of the branches. A weak brother especially needs the influence of righteous men to help him along with the trials and burdens of life. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." There is another thought in burden bearing: "For every man shall bear his own burden." It is the duty of every man and made a part of his burden to help all, and especially the weak.

Paul, in Acts 20: 28-31, in his charge to the elders of Ephesus, tells them of the solemn duties committed unto them—watching the flock. What flock is this? The one at Ephesus (verse 17); the one chosen in him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1: 4). He told them that grievous wolves shall enter in among them, not sparing the flock. He does not say the wolves are of the flock, but shall enter in. Paul had an idea of the strong efforts that

would be made to introduce false teachings among them, and thereby shipwreck their faith.

Paul had not ceased to warn every one night and day with tears for three years. If not possible for a member of the flock to be lost, why warn them night and day with tears? Why shed tears of uneasiness and have heart longings if there was no danger? Why shed tears and warn them if God had eternally saved them before the foundation of the world? If that be true, what could grievous wolves do with such a flock as that? If once saved means forever saved, Paul made useless efforts.

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” (John 10: 27, 28.) Note: Eternal life is given to them that *hear his voice and follow him*. Remove hearing his voice and following him, and there is no promise of eternal life. The man that hears his voice and follows him is the man that will never perish. This is not the road to destruction.

Jesus does not teach that it is impossible for a man to sin and be lost, but teaches that it is impossible for a man to perish that hears his voice and follows him. Just so long as the branches “abide” in the vine and bear fruit they are in a safe condition. So long as his sheep hear his voice and follow him they are

obeying his commands and bearing fruits of righteousness, and they are safe, and they are his sheep if they do this.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” (Heb. 6: 4-6.) Notice the attainments—once enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.

The argument is that they who have gone so far in divine life, “if they shall fall away,” that such could not be renewed unto repentance. They would be below the redeeming grace of God; nothing in the divine scheme of redemption to reach them. Such would be totally depraved. We believe that many have fallen and afterwards become steadfast in divine life. But whenever men go as far as the description here given, if they then “fall away,” there is no recovery. If not possible for men to make such attainments and then fall away, why the mention of such?

“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord,

having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.” (Jude 5.) Once saved, but afterwards destroyed. Why the necessity of reminding them unless man can at one time be saved and then fall away and be lost?

“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved . . . unto the judgment of the great day.” (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2: 4.) Even angels can fall and lose their first estate.

We think the third question satisfactorily answered.

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

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